# The Great War Between Athens And Sparta:

## A Companion To The Military History Of Thucydides



Dr. Bernard W. Henderson




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*Publisher's Note*

Although in most cases we have retained the Author's original spelling and grammar to authentically reproduce the work of the Author and the original intent of such material, some additional notes and clarifications have been added for the modern reader's benefit.

We have also made every effort to include all maps and illustrations of the original edition the limitations of formatting do not allow of including larger maps, we will upload as many of these maps as possible.

# THE GREAT WAR BETWEEN ATHENS AND SPARTA

## A COMPANION TO THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THUCYDIDES

BY


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**ETC., ETC.**

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**DEDICATION**

TO

J. A. R. MUNRO

NOW RECTOR OF LINCOLN AND SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF EXETER

HIS FORMER TUTOR IN GREEK HISTORY

THIS BOOK

IN TRIBUTE BY A PUPIL

NOW FELLOW OF EXETER AND SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF LINCOLN

## PREFACE

THIS book is intended primarily to help students of Thucydides, whether in Greek or in English, at schools and universities. At Oxford in particular there are many undergraduates in these days whose business it is to read three books of Thucydides “in Jowett’s translation” There is therefore not one word in Greek script in the whole of this book, and, apart from the proper names, there are only two or three Greek terms transliterated into English. But, at my publishers’ wise insistence, I have given all references to my Greek authors and have also carried on the subject down to the end of the war after Thucydides’ narrative ends. I hope the book may thus be of special use besides to students of *Literae Humaniores,* and it is a course of lectures for this School (frequently revised) which is its foundation. It is on behalf of these students that I have called attention in occasional notes to certain notable controversies, the evidence for them, and their protagonists. Possibly too, other students of military history, whether ancient or modern, may find matter to interest them in this book. Through-out it I have made all such use of Aristophanes as I could. Even for what is a military history, that of the Peloponnesian War, the poet as a source of evidence is invaluable. A special index of the passages in Aristophanes used in this book is added.

My colleagues, Mr. E. A. Barber and Mr. H. R. Raikes, have kindly given me some help in the reading of the proofs. My very special thanks also are due to my colleague Mr. C. T. Atkinson, who has read the whole book through in proof. His expert and unrivalled knowledge of military and naval history has not only continually assisted me with comment and criticism, but also it has enriched this book with additional examples of great interest.

BERNARD W. HENDERSON.

EXETER COLLEGE,

OXFORD,

*July* 17, 1926.

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## CHAPTER I—THE CAUSE OF THE WAR

### *§ 1. Sparta*

SPARTA was bitterly jealous of Athens, and with reason.

Fifty years ago the two had fought gloriously side by side to drive the Persian invader away in rout from Greece. In that war for freedom Sparta's had been the leadership by land and by sea. The glory of the victory was shared between them. Their friendship had seemed built now for ever on the rock of a common peril faced, a common triumph won.

In the fifty years which followed the last great victories of Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale, Athens had become mistress of a maritime empire. She ruled a thousand cities, boasted her poet.[{1}] This was exaggeration. Yet over two hundred paid her annual tribute. She was Queen of the Grecian seas, and there were but few islands or maritime cities outside of the Peloponnese which remained independent of her Empire. On land indeed, north of Attica's mountain frontier, she had found her overvaulting ambition roughly checked by her dour Boeotian neighbours. In Egypt her armada had met with irreparable disaster. But where her fleets could reach she ruled her Ionian kinsmen sternly, ever since the middle of the century, as a despot rules unwilling subjects, granting them no voice in her counsels, suppressing revolts with harshness, champion of democracy in the subject cities whether this were to their taste or no. Less than ten years had passed since the proud island of Samos off the Asiatic coast had defied her. Pericles, greatest of Athens' Imperialist statesmen, had crushed the secession. In the strength of her navy, in the numbers of her merchant ships, in wealth, resources, and fame Athens was supreme. Her ambition seemed limitless. More and more the Athenians began to dream of a western as well as of an Aegean maritime Empire. Pericles for the time held such dreams in leash. On the western coasts of Greece, in lower Italy, in Sicily, other Greek cities would resent and dispute Athenian predominance. Here Corinth, Sparta's firm friend, the chief naval power of Sparta's Peloponnesian Confederacy, and Corinth's colony Syracuse, would not lightly brook Athenian intervention. Pericles sought no conquest in the west. But he was fully resolved to open the way for trade and commerce in Italian and Sicilian waters for his Athenian ships. He concluded treaties of alliance with Leontini, Syracuse's near neighbour and her foe, and with Rhegium to safeguard the passage for Athenian ships through Messina straits.[{2}] A still greater affront to Corinth was his alliance with her erstwhile colony and bitter foe Corcyra.

Corcyra was necessary to Athens. In days before the invention of the mariner's compass ships dared not strike boldly across the open sea Westward Ho! from the shelter of the Corinthian Gulf. The shortest sea passage was the safest, and traders for Italy and Sicily crept up the coast northwards to Corcyra before venturing across to Italy. Just before the outbreak of the great war the constant bickering between Corcyra and Corinth had flamed out into open war, the pretext, the affairs of a miserable little city Epidamnus on the western coast; the cause, the long-standing feud and commercial rivalry between the two powerful cities. Pericles concluded an alliance with Corcyra.[3] It was "defensive", yet none the less it broke the spirit, if not the letter, of the "Thirty Years Peace", which in 445 B.C. had ended the first war between the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian Confederacy.[4] The alliance with Corcyra was quite clearly to Corinth's hurt. Yet the Athenian could not let one of the strongest navies in Greece, that of Corcyra, pass by absorption or defeat into the control of Athens' greatest trade rival, Corinth. The Corinthians manned their warships and fell upon the blundering Corcyreans. A small watching Athenian squadron saved the defeated Corcyreans at the battle of Sybota Islands, hard by the greater island, from irremediable disaster.[5] The angry Corinthians retired baffled from their enterprise. Corinth appealed to Sparta to take up arms against the tyrant city of Greece.[6] Sparta's proudest tradition was that of liberator of Hellas. She could not refuse the rôle.

For Corinth's vigorous appeal was reinforced by two other most unhappy Greek cities.

Megara, on the isthmus of Corinth, was a city of ancient renown. But since the Persian wars she had fallen upon evil days. Her ill luck it was to be equally important to both of the two rival powers in Greece. In alliance with Athens, she safeguarded the latter from all peril of invasion by land from the south. In alliance with Sparta, she opened the highway to the most powerful army in the land to march undisturbed into Attica and there join hands with the Boeotians, Athens' northern enemies, who, by themselves, dared not do more than make forays over the frontier, if they ventured even this. The strategical importance of Megara to both sides it is impossible to exaggerate. It was the friendship of Megara with Sparta that determined the plans of campaign of both sides at the outset of the great war.

If useful to Sparta, Megara was vital to Athens. She had two ports, Nisaea on the Saronic Gulf, almost in sight of Athens, Pagae on the Corinthian Gulf. Continuous walls linked Nisaea with Megara, as Peiraeus with Athens. No Peloponnesian army could mask the "linked-fortress" and brave the narrow passage of the Scironian Way between mountain and sea if

Megara lay starkly hostile, threatening its communications with its base in the Peloponnese. Thirty years earlier the Athenians had won over Megara to their friendship. At that time Athens had been mistress of Achaea, the strip of coast land on the south of the Corinthian Gulf, of Naupactus, a lonely fort at the western entrance of that Gulf, and, using Pagae, her ships could range at will along the waters of the Gulf. Corinth was then so hemmed in as to be all but blockaded. But Athens had lost Megara by revolt, and the Peace of 445 B.C. had recognised Megara's independence. The city had gladly (for Megara was Dorian by blood and instinct) joined the Peloponnesian League. Pericles had been forced to write off the loss of Megara, bitterest of all the losses of the black five years before the Peace.

But the statesman, most certainly anticipating by many years the coming of the great war, set himself to compel Megara once again to join the Athenian Empire. Force of arms he could not employ. This would but precipitate the coming of the war, and the longer this could be postponed, the greater became those financial resources of Athens which accumulated under his careful provision every year while peace lasted. He fell back upon the weapons of diplomacy, and declared a trade boycott of Megara. No Megarian goods could enter any port or city of the Athenian Empire. Megarian trade was ruined at a single blow. The city slowly starved when, after the outbreak of the war, its home lands were ravaged year by year by the Athenian troops in revenge for the plundering of Attica by the enemy.

Some years after the outbreak of the great war, in the spring of 425 B.C., the Athenian playwright of comedies, Aristophanes, a convinced if humorous pacifist, produced upon the stage a play entitled the *Acharnians*. In it he makes merry at the sufferings of the Megarians. The stout old Attic farmer holds his open market in defiance of laws and public opinion, of bellicose furious charcoal-burners and scoundrelly informers. To the market there comes furtively stealing an unhappy man of Megara, with "two little piglets" for sale. He comes upon the stage, speaking the broadest Doric, dragging his little daughters one by either hand.

"'Guid day, Athanian market, Megara's luve!
By Frien'ly Zeus, I've miss't ye like my mither.
But ye, puir bairnies o' a waefu' father,
Speel up, ye'll aiblins fin' a barley-bannock.
Now listen, bairns, atten' wi' a' yere—painch;
Which wad ye liefer, to be sellt or clemmed?'

'Liefer be sellt! liefer be sellt!' *the children cry.*

'An' sae say I mysel'!' *answers the father*:

‘But wha sae doited
As to gie aught for *you,* a sicker skaith?
Aweel, I ken a pawkie Megara-trick;
I’se busk ye up, an’ say I’m bringin’ piggies.
Here, slip these wee bit clooties on yere nieves,
An’ shaw yeresells a decent grumphie’s weans.
For gin’ I tak’ ye hame unsellt, by Hairmes
Ye’ll thole the warst extremities o’ clemmin’.
Ne’est, pit this lang pig-snowties owre yere nebs,
An’ stech yere bodies in this sackie. Sae.
An’ min’ ye grunt an’ grane an’ g-r-r awa’,
An’ mak’ the skirls o’ little Mystery piggies.’”

He offers them to the puzzled farmer:

“Mon! wad ye hear them skirlin’? Now, piggies, skirl awa’.
Ye winna? winna skirl, ye graceless hizzies?
By Hairmes, then I’se tak’ ye hame again.”
“Wee! wee! wee!” *the children squeak.*
“She’s no tail,” *the farmer grumbles.*
“Aweel,” *the Megarian explains,*
“The puir wee thing, she’s owre young yet,
But when she’s auld, she’ll hae a gawcie tail.”

And so the jolly fooling goes on for many lines yet, till the Athenian buys one for “a tie o’ garlic” and the other for “half a peck o’ saut”.

“Traffickin’ Hairmes,” cries the exultant father,
“Wad that I could swap
Baith wife an’ mither on sic terms as thae.”[{7}]

Napoleon’s continental system injured but failed to break the spirit of England. In like manner Pericles’ boycott of Megarian traders provoked defiance, not submission. The “Megarian Decrees”, each harsher in tone than its predecessor,[{8}] failed of their object. Hungry and outraged, the proud little city appealed to Sparta to intervene by force of arms on her behalf. Let the Peloponnesian League of free and equal allies, of which Sparta was recognised head—yet all the cities had their rights of speech and vote in the great Common Council of the members—let the League take action to save one of its number from perishing. Let the Council of the League be summoned by Sparta—with Sparta rested this prerogative—and let the

members vote their ultimatum to the foreign tyrant city.

From within the Athenian Empire itself came secretly a reinforcing petition. Long years had passed since the chief island of the Saronic Gulf, Aegina, had been the greatest of all colonising and trading cities of the mainland. Before Athens or Corinth had taken to the sea, Aegina had queened it in the Aegean. Now she lay prostrate under Athens' heel. A reluctant member of the Athenian Empire, she found herself far more heavily taxed than any other city under Athens' rule. The annual tribute imposed on her in recent years by Pericles was crushing. Thasos in the north Aegean in the years just before the war paid thirty talents annually. But Thasos may have had compensation made her in the recovery of her mines and markets on the Thracian mainland opposite for this heavy annual payment. The like sum had been year after year demanded of Aegina. Then, a short while ago, Pericles, ever on the outlook for new sources of revenue for Athens, had (it seems all but certain) raised the sum of tribute demanded to fifty-three talents.[{9}] The Thirty Years Peace had guaranteed the island at least some measure of "autonomy", home rule. Pericles, the Aeginetans declared, had scorned the guarantee.[{10}] Taxed, oppressed, mocked, Aegina sent secretly imploring Sparta to intervene on her behalf.[{11}] Spartan interference with the internal affairs and administration of an independent Power—what could this mean but war?

The urgent appeals of Corinth, Aegina, Megara, fell at Sparta upon attentive and eager ears. Hardly a Spartan citizen could be found who was not fearful of the growth of the power of Athens. True, the rival city had suffered heavy losses within quite recent memory. But, for a decade, since the failure of Samos to cut loose, Pericles had been building up Athens' strength and her wealth anew. Only a score of months ago he had annexed the Corcyrean navy to Athens' side. Then, again, at the moment she was embarrassed by a new revolt. The strong city of Potidaea in Chalcidice, north of the Aegean, induced by Spartan promises of support, had just broken out in desperate revolt after many years of restlessness. Potidaea was in fact a colony in old days from Corinth, and her own chief magistrate was still sent to her from Corinth, though it was many years since she had been swept into the all-embracing net of the Athenian Empire. Pericles hurried troops by sea to invest the town. The city held out stubbornly, but her doom seemed certain.[{12}] This added fuel to Corinth's wrath with Athens. From the Spartan point of view it was more important that a large part of the available land army of Athens was fast engaged in the north, far away from the scene of war at home, if war there should now be. Were this force recalled, the friendly city would be saved. Meanwhile the

Athenians were pouring out men and money in their efforts to take the fortress. A better opportunity for war could surely never be found. For the way of invasion by Megara still lay open to the southern army. Athens' very temporary difficulties in the far north offered a chance not to be missed, the chance of a lifetime.

Had Sparta at this crisis been reluctant to engage in war there would have been no war. Corinth might bluster as she liked and threaten to secede from the Peloponnesian League if Sparta kept the peace.{13} This was mere idle "bluff". Alone and unsupported, Corinth dared not provoke the enmity of Athens. Her vigorous insistence it was that helped to goad the slow-thinking cautious Spartan into final action. But at the last it was Spartan eagerness as well which determined the outbreak of hostilities. A modern German writer, Adolf Holm, has denied this. Regarding commercial rivalry as the mainspring of political action, he declares that "Sparta was obliged to wage war simply because Corinth's interests demanded it ".{14} No doubt, of the many "occasions "of the war, the "affairs "of Epidamnus, of Corcyra, of Potidaea, concerned Corinth more closely than any other of the allied cities of the League. But the "true cause" of the great war was not so superficial or so obvious. This cause those who pondered more deeply would find in Sparta, in Sparta's "fear" of the growth of the power of Athens", The historian, Thucydides, so chary of advertising his own judgments, speaks here with no uncertain voice.{15} The facts confirm it. The Spartan Assembly, debating in private by itself, voted by a huge majority that "Athens had broken the Peace".{16} There was no reluctance here. Then Sparta summoned the general meeting of representatives from all the members of the League. The League by a majority voted for war.{17} But to give themselves time for preparation and equipment, negotiations, insincere enough, were opened with Athens. Finally, when Sparta felt herself ready, she despatched a vigorous ultimatum. To avert war, Athens must abandon the alliance with Corcyra, raise the siege of Potidaea, grant home rule to Aegina, rescind the "Megarian Decrees".{18} The terms were impossible of acceptance and in fact insulting, and Sparta knew it. In just the same way, the terms of Austria's ultimatum to Serbia in 1914 were of set purpose made so severe as to ensure rejection. Athens, however, at some point offered to submit the questions at issue to arbitration.{19} This has been regarded by the German as a mockery. When all Greece was divided into two hostile camps, where, he asks, could an arbitrator be found?{20} But the terms of that very "Peace" of 445 B.C. which Athens was declared to have broken had stipulated for arbitration in the case of any future disputes. Athens stuck fast by the treaty, as in honour bound. It was Sparta who now brushed the offer contemptuously aside. When, some years later, misfortunes sent as by Heaven fell upon the

Spartans, then, but not till then, conscience began to prick them. They had sinned, they subsequently confessed, in rejecting the arbitration and had suffered a righteous penalty for their sin. The admission, a significant one, was made only when they were able to point a finger of scorn at Athens when she too, at least in Spartan eyes, wantonly outraged the terms of a later peace, and the vengeance of the gods for violated faith must now be transferred to the other side. So with a purified conscience and high hopes the Spartans took up the burden of war fifteen years later once again.[{21}] But at the outbreak of the war no such moral considerations swayed the Spartans. Only punishment could arouse the sense of sin. It was in vain that the sagacious old warrior, King Archidamus, a man over sixty years of age, warned his folk that the struggle would be long and desperate, that they would bequeath the war to their children.[{22}] The impetuous politician at home, himself no soldier, the ephor Sthenelaidas, hardly deigned seriously to answer any of the king's reasoned arguments. Sparta's honour was involved, he flamed in fierce contemptuous words. There was nothing else mattered.[{23}] Later, when the whole Congress of the League discussed the question, the Corinthians made efforts to answer *seriatim* Archidamus' arguments against the war. They had no money? They would borrow it. They had no ships? They would build them. They lacked naval experience? The longer the war went on, if the king's warning *should* prove true, the greater their experience would grow. The war itself would suggest other devices, blockade, forts, anything you please. What at least *was* beyond dispute was Sparta's heroic courage. Dorians aux armes! Vive la guerre![{24}]

Thucydides, in his "Speeches", represents in a fashion as masterly as it is unique the temper of the times. The Corinthians' arguments fall little short of military lunacy. They carried weight because an excited meeting is not swayed by cold reason. In the same way it is the ephor's fiery speech which expresses the popular feeling at Sparta. All considerations making for delay or caution were hurled aside. The Spartans counted on speedy victory. They would be back home in triumph "before the autumn leaves had fallen".[{25}] Sparta was eager for war, and so the war began.

It is not the only time that the German has misunderstood or misrepresented the cause of a great war.

### *§ 2. Pericles*

On the Athenians' side there was more hesitation in accepting the gage of war so defiantly

hurled at the city. Then Pericles came resolutely forward and bade them pick it up without delay. The enemy were sorely in need of time for mobilising army, navy, resources. With some subtlety, therefore, they sought to entice the Athenians into hesitation and delay. Their demands for concessions by Athens might seem *en bloc* excessive and extreme. Modern writers have denied this. They have urged that the demands were moderate enough. The simple statement of their nature confutes this view. A Corcyrean navy lost and passing over to the other side? The whole of Athens' existence depended upon her undisputed command of the seas. She could not feed more than a fraction of her population with corn grown at home. Potidaea independent? This meant the loss of many another city in that the most disturbed of all four "districts" of the Empire, Chalcidice, and a shrinking of money revenues beyond repair. Aegina autonomous? Is there to be a hostile oligarchic local government at Athens' very gates, dictated and upheld by the foreigner? How could Athens in wisdom as well as in mere honour brook such interference from outside with her own "domestic" government of her own Empire?

There was an idea in the air that these demands by Sparta were not quite seriously meant, that they could be reduced, or even abandoned, if Athens were willing to make just one concession, namely if she would promptly rescind the "Megarian Decrees." This was the "irreducible minimum". Modern writers have not invented the idea, but they have caught at it eagerly, and behind its barricade they have opened their heavy batteries upon the last shreds of Pericles' reputation for wisdom, honour, and patriotism.{26} So small a concession to avert so great and terrible a war! Why did he urge his trusting citizens with an eloquence superb, irresistible, triumphant, not to yield one single inch? He disputed the honesty of the other side. One concession, he maintained, would be but the prelude to other demands. The Spartans were insincere, striving to delude the folk by false hopes all the while they were busily making ready for the war on which their hearts were stoutly bent. The "irreducible minimum" in itself, it is clear, was in Pericles' eyes impossible of acceptance. Athens *must* have security on her frontiers. Only a Megara within the Empire could give her this. Only by the decrees could he force Megara back within the fold. Was Attica always to be exposed helpless to invasion by the one great military and aggressive power of the continent, with the remembrance of an earlier war always rankling in her bosom? For security Athens would even pay the price of war. Better a war today which he had good reason to hope she would happily survive than a life of constant fear and peril.{27}

The argument at Athens might well seem unanswerable, even if Athens could have bought a

prolongation of the uneasy peace by the rescinding of the “Megarian Decrees”. Not even this can be maintained, when such was the temper of the enemy; when the Spartan confidence in speedy victory was so widespread; when the whole of the grievances of Corinth would have remained without redress even were Megara satisfied. The idea of the “one concession to avert war” was in very truth but a sorry Spartan device to gain more time for mobilisation. The more ready Sparta grew for war, the more exorbitant her demands became. Pericles detected the fraud, and at his urging the Athenians stood firm. “The Olympian thundered and lightened”, the poet Aristophanes wrote concerning the dead statesman, “and confounded Hellas”.[{28}] Pericles, for long years, had anticipated the coming of the great war and made provision for it. On the Athenian side he also was cause of its outbreak in 431 B.C. That he yielded reluctantly to pressure put upon him by a supposed “Trading-Party of the Peiraeus” there is no ounce of evidence to prove. This, one of the more unattractive of modern theories,[{29}] may at least be dismissed. But we are bound to pay more heed to Pericles’ own countryman and contemporary, Aristophanes, concerning this matter.

The poet hated the war. Like so many of his fellow-countrymen he loved the country and country life and jollity. When war came, invading armies marched into Attica, driving the scared peasants and landowners to take refuge behind the city walls, living on the produce of the countryside, destroying the olive trees, cutting down the vines, plundering farm and country house, and carrying the spoils in triumph home. So the Boeotians on the north enriched themselves later at the expense of a superbly furnished land.[{30}] Pericles, author of the war, became a fair target for the onslaught of the “Comic Poets” one after another. Athenian Tragedy left modern politics severely alone in its choice of subjects. The German, Holm, has deplored this in eloquent language. Tragedy, he writes, might better have fulfilled its noble mission of elevating and inspiring the people had it emphasised the national aspirations instead of confining itself to the legends of the mythical heroic age. Thus it left the treatment of the real heroic age to the Comic dramatists “who destroyed all the good done by their praise of the victors of Marathon by a one-sided advocacy of a feeble Peace policy”.[{31}] Three tragedies at least, the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, the *Suppliants* and the *Troades* of Euripides, were in fact inspired by, and intended to influence, the political circumstances of the writer’s own day. But with these rare exceptions the complaint is true. The Comic stage supplied the critics of Government policy and hurled abuse and innuendo unsparingly against every popular statesman. So common was this that it can have done the victims little hurt. The people came to laugh, and went away laughing. No one could take the poet’s diatribes seriously, and a

statesman would be foolishly sensitive to take much notice of even the most violent and grotesque attack. Twice Aristophanes sets out to explain the cause of the great war. The more trivial and absurd his story, the more laughter and applause it might hope to gain. Pericles must be shown, long after his death, to have been inspired by the meanest and the most personal of motives when he urged his city into war. The whole age-long struggle of East with West, of barbarian with Hellene, had its origin when a man carried off a damsel in a piratical raid, and, of course, the other side retaliated in precisely the same fashion. This was the beginning of Herodotus' history. Aristophanes saw the chance to parody the famous story, so seriously stated as a fact. Young revellers of Athens carried off a Megarian lady. The Megarians in their turn kidnapped two of Aspasia's women. This roused Pericles, whose Milesian wife Aspasia was, to fury. Hence and hence alone came the "Megarian Decrees"; hence the "clash of shields"[{32}] This comedy, the *Acharnians*, is just comic foolery and deceived no one at the time. The war dragged on. Four years later, in 421 B.C., the poet in the *Peace* handled the theme again. This time Pericles' friend, the sculptor Pheidias, takes Aspasia's place as the ultimate cause of the outbreak of the great war. The god Hermes delivers his exposition to the angry husbandmen:

> "O most worthy sapient farmers, listen now and understand,
> If you fain would learn the reason why it was Peace left the land.
> Pheidias began the mischief, having come to grief and shame;
> Pericles was next in order, fearing he might share the blame,
> Dreading much your hasty temper and your savage bulldog ways;
> So before misfortune reached him, he contrived a flame to raise,
> By his Megara-enactment setting all the world ablaze.
> Such a bitter smoke ascended while the flames of war he blew,
> That from every eye in Hellas everywhere the tears it drew.
> Wailed the vine and rent its branches, when the evil news it heard;
> Butt on butt was dashed and shivered, by revenge and anger stirred;
> There was none to stay the tumult; Peace in silence disappeared."

The stocky farmer stands amazed:

> "By Apollo", he bursts out,
> "I had never heard these simple facts narrated,
> No, nor knew Peace was so closely to our Pheidias related."

The husbandmen in chorus echo his surprise:

> "No, nor I, till just this moment: that is why Peace looks so fair.

Goodness me! how many things escape our notice, I declare."[{33}]

For ten long weary years of war Pericles' fear lest he should be involved in his friend Pheidias' disgrace unless he diverted attention by kindling the flames of war has "escaped notice". Aristophanes' contribution to the discussion concerning Pericles' motives is quite humorous, if belated, jesting. Only a stupid old rustic would take it seriously. The quick-witted Athenian spectators held their sides and laughed consumedly. They were not quick to resent imputations cast upon a great statesman after his death. Pericles' reputation and honour towered too loftily on high to be harmed by the merrymaking gibes of a poet jester at a season of high revel. The poet himself would have been the first to shout with laughter at any stupid fellow who proposed to take him *au pied de la lettre*.

And yet writers, both ancient and modern, have hastened to adopt and amplify this suggestion concerning the origin of the statesman's "militarism". It is an ungrateful business, this whole story. His critics point out that in the years just before the outbreak of the war Pericles' political predominance was, after many years, for the first time threatened by a coalition of his opponents against him. Extremists of the left democratic wing and jealous old Conservatives joined in the hunt. They dared not for the moment attack the man himself. His friends gave them a better opportunity. The Athenians were as pious and superstitious, despite all the "Periclean culture", as any folk in Greece. In days to come their pietism was to cost them dear. Now the popular conscience was beginning to be troubled by the atheism of philosophers; the popular sense of decency was ready to be outraged by the prominence of a Salon whose centre and life was—a woman! "When a man marries", writes the Athenian Xenophon, "he chooses for his bride her who has seen and heard as little as possible."[{34}] And any reaction after the wedding seems to have been discouraged. Hence it came to pass that "Women"—a Cambridge historian pens the neat epigram—"played no part in the history of Athena's city"[{35}] Yet—Aspasia's Salon! Was not Pericles himself presently to cry in public: "That woman is most praiseworthy of whom men speak the least whether for praise or blame."[{36}] Who could help talking about the statesman's own Aspasia?

Prosecutions followed. Pericles' trusted architect for his great buildings, Pheidias, the glory of Athenian sculpture for all time, was accused of stealing gold entrusted to him for his great golden and ivory statue of Athena on the Acropolis. "Through the golden age of Pericles", it has recently been said, "the gods were protected by the cloak of a superb art." The cloak did not protect the artist. He cleared himself triumphantly of the disgraceful charge. The assailants

returned to the attack. They prosecuted him for atheism. He had carved his own likeness on the shield of the goddess. Florentine painters dared to put their own little selves worshipping with the Magi at the manger, or as onlookers at the Last Supper. The democracy of ancient Athens would have shuddered at any such impiety. Pheidias was condemned, thrown into prison, and in prison presently he died. The philosopher Anaxagoras, also Pericles' friend, was next a victim. He had declared the sun to be but a blazing stone. To escape the penalty for such impious scepticism Anaxagoras fled hastily overseas. The assailants with renewed vigour fell on Aspasia herself, prosecuting her for immorality and impiety. Only Pericles' personal entreaty in the law court saved her from her threatened doom. The reactionaries gathered courage. The elections for 433 B.C. gave Pericles a most unwelcome colleague upon the Board of Ten Generals, the chief executive of Athens, in the person of the son of his old rival and political opponent Cimon, the most renowned of Athenian admirals of the earlier generation. It was upon the ruins of Cimon's discredited policy of friendship with Sparta that thirty years ago Pericles as a young politician had climbed to power. Now Cimon's own son, Lacedaemonius, was to be his colleague. The young man's very name showed how little likely he was to sympathise with the old statesman's foreign policy. And the tradition of hatred between the two great rival families to which they belonged dated back for at least a century or more. The months passed by. Pericles seemed to be losing the control of the popular Assembly. The people rewarded the accusers in the recent trials. Over his own head there hung the threat of a veritable prosecution in his turn for embezzlement. Was there nothing he could do to regain his old unquestioned political supremacy at Athens? Was there no device by which he could save his own political position?

> "Most writers assert that this was the reason why he kindled the flame of war, thinking that this would consume the accusations and abate the envy felt against him. For in grave times of peril the city could only entrust herself to him for guidance, so great was his prestige."

So, five centuries later, writes Plutarch, in the finest of all his notable *Lives of Illustrious Men*.[{37}]

Craft or wisdom was justified of her son. The threat of accusation vanished as by magic. The whole people of Athens rallied to their great statesman's support. Extraordinary powers were conferred upon him. He was elected the recognised President of the College of Generals. The other nine were but his subordinates in repute, if not in some measure in actual power.[{38}] His policy of "no compromise" was enthusiastically adopted. The outbreak of war had saved

him.

That war was unnecessary and ill-timed. Postpone it for a few more years, and how much stronger would Athens have been! Argos then would have been free to join her. No Spartan army would dare march to the Isthmus *en route* for Attica with a hostile Argos on the flank, threatening to sever its communications at any moment. At the time when war broke out Athens could not implore Argive aid, for Argos was bound to a thirty years' peace with Sparta, and that peace had yet a dozen years to run. Why could not Athens by a timely and a small concession postpone the evil day of war? Only Pericles withstood this delay. And only his own political safety dictated his successful opposition to the least hint of compromise.

The German writer, Julius Beloch, is beyond question the most brilliant of all recent historians of ancient Greece. With stark Teutonic brutality, he attributes to Pericles just these personal motives and no others:

> "I do not see", he writes, "how Pericles' policy is intelligible on any other hypothesis. To suppose that he provoked the war simply to get possession of Megara reminds one rather too forcibly of the tale of the peasant who set fire to his house to get rid of the vermin. Only there is this difference. The peasant did at least get rid of the vermin. But Athens never recovered Megara. Devotees of the Pericles-cult, of course, bristle with indignation when they are asked to recognise the fact that the great Athenian statesman caused the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war for personal reasons. Thucydides has been less emotional. He holds it as a fact needing no explanation that a statesman is influenced by selfish motives."[{39}]

Why then should we be sentimental or squeamish and try to defend the Athenian's patriotism or discover honourable motives for him? The poet's jesting has become bitter earnest. It is exactly this kind of political "rascality", *scelleratezza*, which the old Florentine, Machiavelli, admired in the princes of his own day. Let us transfer it to Pericles and be prepared to admire it in him also.

This attack on Pericles is plausible. It is also to be rejected.

It is unnecessary to reiterate the arguments that the concessions required of Athens were one and all impossible, whether she had regard to her honour or to her security. This idea of a "way of escape" was a will of the wisp. If Sparta was bent on war, war there would be, and in the year 431 B.C., however tightly Argos' hands were tied. But in defence of Pericles just one more thought remains. The whole attack made upon his motives is based upon that famous method of conviction labelled the *cui bono?* argument. Who stood to gain? Let it then be granted that from the actual declaration of war Pericles *did* gain. But what of the war as it

continued in the quite immediate future? It profited no man so little, it endangered no statesman more. It was waged upon his own plan of campaign, a plan which, as will next be shown, demanded amazing sacrifices from the citizens of Athens. Lands, crops, homesteads, were surrendered a freewill offering to the invader. Pericles demanded and exacted such sacrifices. This roused to fury the agricultural and landowning classes. No doubt it was among these, as a German writer remarks cynically, that the opponents of his policy were already especially numerous.[{40}] But the poor folk in the city had also to pay the grievous price of war on Pericles' plan. In the city there was all the hopeless misery of overcrowding. In a short while disease raged through its streets. This alone he had had no reason to anticipate when he persuaded the Athenians to accept the war. There was a great reaction of feeling among the people. Their idol became an object of bitter hatred. It was not long before he was deposed from office, fined heavily, in no small danger of his life. "The man who had ruled the half of the Hellenic world with almost monarchical power stood within but a short distance of a condemnation to death," as Beloch himself writes:[{41}]

> "The common way of the mob!"
> "With every minute you do change a mind,
> And call him noble that was now your hate,
> Him vile that was your garland."

The Athenian people had stuck fast by Pericles for many a long year in weal and woe and do not, in his case, merit this bitter reproach hurled against the Roman mob. But now a far harder test of fidelity was by his own choice to be imposed on them. Could any people's temper stand the strain of such a war? Unless Pericles was curiously ignorant of his people's nature when he urged them to a war which brought such evils in its train, he can scarcely have been guilty of a blind and foolish opportunism in the supposed interests of his own political position when he bade his folk stand firm and defy the enemy.


BOEOTIA-ATTICA
English Miles
0 5 10 15
Frontiers
to Heraclea
to Heraclea
EUBOIC SEA
EUBOEA
LOCRIS
Atalante Island
OPUNTIA
Opus
Elatea
Hyampolis
Parapotamii
R. Cephisus
PHOCIS
Chaeronea
Orchomenus
Lake Copais
Acraephium
Chalcis
Schoenus
Aulis
Mycalessus
Eretria
Coronea
Haliartus
Onchestus
Potniae
BOEOTIA
Delium
Oropus
to Delphi
Thespiae
THEBES
Tanagra
R. Asopus
Bulis
Thisbe
Leuctra
Scolus
Hysiae
Erythrae
Cnopsis
Plataea
Cithaeron
Scaphae
Siphae
M. Cithaeron
Panactum
M. Parnes
Eleutherae
Oenoe
Aegosthena
Decelea
CORINTHIAN GULF
Phyle
Oea
Pagae
M. Kerata
ATTICA
Acharnae
MEGARIS
Thria
Oenoe
Tripodiscus
Eleusis
Rheitoi
M. Geraneia
MEGARA
Sicyon
Nisaea
ATHENS
Salamis
Lechaeum
Phaleron
Peiraeus
CORINTH
Cenchreae
Salamis
S A R O N I C G U L F

## CHAPTER II—PERICLES

### *§ 1. The strength of the rivals*

AT the beginning of a war each side must consider its own and the enemy's resources. This done, each side plans its "strategy" as best it may. "Strategy" is the plan of campaign. It is too narrowly defined as "the art of bringing the enemy to battle", of course under conditions that promise victory. For "strategy" includes the art of avoiding battle altogether, of course under conditions which are likely to involve defeat. "Tactics" are a simpler matter. These imply that the armies or navies are face to face. "Tactics" are defined as "the art of defeating the enemy." Tactics may win a battle and strategy may lose a war for the side which won the battle. On the other hand, good strategy may be hopelessly spoilt by bad tactics. A lost battle is a hard nut for strategy to crack. Yet there are times when tactical genius, like Alexander's, may redeem strategical blundering. Pericles framed his strategy for the opening of the war in the light of the comparative strength in men, ships, and money, of the two sides, though also with particular regard to the "temper" of the enemy. This comparison must also be the prelude to a discussion of the wisdom or folly of that strategy, a question round which controversy rages furiously.

At Athens military service was incumbent on every citizen between the ages of 18 and 60. There was no need to improvise a conscript army as the war went on. This was but the common rule for every ancient city state. (Hence the idea of bestowing the franchise on women was, except in the buffoonery of comedy, incredible, even in Sparta.) The citizen army thus consisted of heavy-armed (hoplites), light-armed, and cavalry. The "hoplite" force consisted of 19,000 men.{42} Of these, 16,000 were citizens, and 3,000 were "metics", resident aliens who had to perform military service. Of the 19,000 hoplites, 3000 were either too young or too old for service in the field, and served as a "Garrison Army" to guard Athens and Peiraeus and their connecting walls, and such small forts as were placed on or near the roads leading to the northern frontier. Besides the hoplite force there were "light-armed" troops and cavalry. The former were numerous, and according to Thucydides many more than 10,000 of these were engaged in the campaign of Delium in 424 B.C.{43} Their military efficiency was not highly regarded, and as these were called on in large numbers to man the fleet their organisation was loose.{44} Among these was a special corps of 1600 archers, who were supplemented by hired mercenaries. But all Greeks relied at this time on the hoplite to win land battles. The cavalry were a sorry handful, but 1200 in number, including horse-archers. They have won fame on the boards of the comic stage in the *Knights* of Aristophanes. They won no glory in the great war.

Athens' Thessalian allies ought to have remedied her own sore deficiency in cavalry, but the Thessalian horse belonged to that part of the population of that much-divided land which was most lukewarm in Athens' cause, and, save on the occasion of the petty skirmish at "Phrygia", a hamlet in Attica, in 431 B.C.,[45] Thessalian cavalry gave very little help to Athens.

Contingents could be requisitioned from the cities of the Empire, and formed part of the great armada which sailed to Sicily in 415 B.C.[46] Except when some such great effort was made, the "subject allies" rarely supplied troops except for minor operations on land near their own cities. Independent allies and mercenaries could also be enlisted on occasion. But for the war as a whole Athens must rely mainly on her 19,000 hoplites, and it was not an imposing force, even on the petty scale (in our own terrible experience of warfare) of all ancient inter-Greek warfare before the days of Alexander.

The land army of the Peloponnesian League, when mustered at strength, was by itself stronger in numbers than the full Athenian levy; and the Spartans, though few proportionately to the rest, supplied a stiffening of the whole of such priceless value that, with the one doubtful exception of the mysterious battle of Oenoe,[47] they had never yet been beaten in fair fight. Their northern allies in Boeotia were a doughty hoplite force, with whom the Athenians had, in recent years, measured themselves at the battle of Coronea to their own undoing. At the battle of Delium in 424 B.C. the numbers of Athenian and Boeotian hoplites were equal, 7000 on either side. Their courage was not equal. The cavalry of the northerners—Boeotians, Phocians, Locrians—were numerous and excellent, and nearly twice as strong in proportion to their heavy infantry as were the Athenian horse.[48] Their light-armed troops again were as many in number as the Athenian, and were more carefully organised and disciplined. Long before the next century had run its course the Boeotians were to prove themselves the sturdiest and best soldiers in Greece proper. Their day was not yet, but in the battles of the great war the coming events cast their shadows before. At its outbreak the northern army could be unduly belittled by clever Athenian strategists. One fact, however, was certain. Let the League forces on the south join hands with their northern allies, and there was no Athenian force strong enough to bear the brunt of the joint attack in the open field. An Athenian annalist of the time has set the total military strength of the enemy at the round number of 100,000 men.[49] The joint army which wasted Attica at the outset of the war numbered 60,00.[50] The figure seems out of all reason in comparison with the opposition it was likely to encounter. Archidamus, its general, certainly proposed to make sure, if the Athenians came out to fight. This, indeed, was his one great hope,

and, had not Pericles already been stoutly resolved, as will be seen, *not* to fight, the very numbers of the invaders might have determined him upon this prudent if unheroic course. As it was, it cannot be charged against the Spartan king that he defeated his own object. And invasion is always a risky affair. In the American Civil War the army of the South defending Richmond numbered 60,000 men. When the Northern general, McClellan, moved against it on York River he brought 110,000 men, while yet another 100,000 men hung menacingly on the north. Outnumbered on land always by the enemy, the Southern generals won victory after victory in sheer hard fighting. The odds against the South were much the same, some two or even three to one, as were those against Athens in the great war. The Confederates' strategy was different. Athens found no Lee or Jackson to lead her armies into battle. Her one brilliant general, Demosthenes, won notable victories, as will be seen. At the chief of these, the battle of Olpae, he had just sixty Athenian hoplites in his composite army. "The hoplite force at Athens seems to be in the sorriest condition," wrote an Athenian a few years after the war began.{51} "In a single pitched battle", Pericles himself admits, "the Peloponnesians and their allies are a match for all Greece." Later he seeks to encourage his people. "Our enemies", he cries, "have never yet felt our united strength; the care of a navy divides our attention, and on land we are obliged to send our own citizens everywhere. But they, if they meet and defeat what is but a part of our whole army, are as proud as if they had routed us all, and, if they are defeated, they pretend they have been vanquished by our entire army." It were difficult to name any such victory won by Athens over the Peloponnesians in the lifetime of the majority of those of his hearers who would be going to war. Pericles' argument can have encouraged but few of these, and must have deceived himself least of all his fellow-countrymen.{52} Assuredly on land Athens could not speak with her enemies in the gate. Her one hope was to sever north from south and keep the League army at home by some counter-irritation. Once again the vital importance of Megara to the security of Attica starts clearly into view.

Upon the sea the position was exactly reversed. In numbers, as in efficiency, the Athenian navy was every whit as superior to their enemy as were the latter on the land. Athens' triremes numbered 300 by themselves.{53} Others were furnished by the two or three allies in the Aegean who still proudly contributed ships and not money to the resources of the Empire. Thus Chios had a navy of 60 triremes at least.{54} The new independent ally Corcyra could muster as many as 120, and actually did send 50 of these to help their friends in the first year of the war.{55} Then Corcyra's enthusiasm evaporated, and Athens had little help from her afterwards. But at least Corcyra's ships formed no part of the foemen's fleet.

And a sorry fleet this Peloponnesian fleet was, as the “war by sea” was very quickly to show. In numbers, Corinth and her friendly colonies might muster 130 triremes, Megara some 40, Elis a miserable 10.[56] Once, before the war entered upon its final stage in 413 B.C., a Peloponnesian fleet of as many as 100 ships was found afloat in home waters.[57] Once again, greatly daring, a Spartan admiral, Alcidas, took a squadron of 40 ships right across the Aegean in 427 B.C., only, as will presently be narrated, to run in panic homewards at sight of just two Athenian triremes in the offing.[58] But most significant of all is the comment by Thucydides upon a naval battle when neither side won the victory outright. In the year 413 B.C. a Corinthian squadron of some 30 ships was lying at anchor in the bay of Erineus on the Achaean shore at the mouth of the Corinthian Gulf to safeguard the passage of merchantmen from Sicily to the Peloponnese. The Athenians, despite the strength of their navy, were never able to blockade the long coast-line of the Peloponnese even in the summer months when alone operations by sea were possible. So in this the eighteenth year of the long war the small Corinthian squadron lay in Erineus bay, stretched in close line from one promontory to the other on the opposite side of the harbour. Troops lined the whole circuit of the little bay. Presently Diphilus, the Athenian admiral, sailing from Naupactus on the coast opposite with 33 vessels hovered off the harbour mouth. Seeing the strength of the enemy’s position he did not attempt to force the entrance. The Corinthian admiral, Polyanthes, took his courage in both hands. He had carefully strengthened the “catheads” of his warships, a noteworthy device, and thereby made his ships the superiors of the lighter Athenian craft if it came to ramming. So he sallied out of harbour and bore down upon the enemy. His unusual courage and skill met with some well-deserved success. Three of his own ships were sunk, but he managed by ramming to put seven of the enemy out of action. With their oarage in disconsolate fragments the Athenians lay helpless on the surface of the sea. Luckily for the crews, the wind blew them northwards towards the friendly shore. So the engagement ended. Both sides withdrew to the ports whence they started. No prisoners were taken on either side. In itself it was a small and unimportant skirmish in a very secondary “theatre of operations”. It had no direct influence upon the course of the war. The Athenian command of the Greek and Western seas was not in any way seriously imperilled. But the Corinthians were enormously elated. They had fought by sea and they had not seen their fleet annihilated. They raised a trophy of victory on their coast with loud paeans of triumph. The Athenians, not to be outdone, presently, when all the enemy had sailed or marched away, also raised a counter-trophy on the Achaean shore some two miles off. But theirs was not so speedy nor so whole-hearted a jubilation. “For”, writes Thucydides, himself

an Athenian admiral at one time in the war:

> "The Athenians thought that they were defeated because they had not gained a signal victory: the Corinthians considered themselves conquerors if they were not severely beaten."{59}

The battle of Jutland was a great strategical victory. Never again did the German fleet challenge for the mastery of the sea. But that fleet had, albeit with loss, escaped homewards from the battle. Who that recalls the memory of that June morning when the news reached England can bear to this day to think long on the consternation, the almost incredulous anger, of the English? Was this the second Trafalgar of their dreams? And all the joy-bells of Berlin were ringing.

This their grave naval inferiority irked the Spartan Government sorely. At the very outset of the struggle they indulged in wild hopes of raising their available fleet to a grand total of 500, and sent orders to their friends in Italy and Sicily to send them such ships as they had, and build the many more required to make up this number.{60} The Spartans could summon ships from the west as Owen Glendower could call spirits from the vasty deep:

> "But will they come when you do call for them?"

It was not until the disaster at Syracuse had destroyed two-thirds of the Athenian navy that a score or so of ships, a twenty from Syracuse, a ten from Thurii, appeared in Aegean waters, when all men thought that Athens' doom was sealed.{61} Thereafter, and then only, the numbers of the rival fleets were equalised. And still for many years victory by sea rested with the Athenians.

Maritime skill, the most valuable of all Athenian assets, acquired by fifty unbroken years of practice, was added to what was an overwhelming superiority of numbers if the Athenian Admiralty handled their numbers well. Light-heartedly the Peloponnesian thought that such skill could be either improvised or at least speedily acquired.

"As soon as we have brought our naval skill up to the level of theirs, our courage will surely give us the victory," so Thucydides makes the Corinthians reassure the Spartans. "For courage is a natural gift which they cannot learn. But skill is a thing acquired, to be won by practice."{62} With what grim amusement must the historian, himself an admiral, have written these words!

"How can they acquire skill, no sailors they,—mere tillers of the soil?" Pericles cried

scornfully to his people. “Maritime skill is like skill of other kinds, not a thing to be cultivated casually, at any chance time, by the way. It is jealous of any other occupation which distracts the attention for one moment from itself.”{63} Every word of this is true, as the English beyond all peoples know. It needed a Phormio to drive the lesson home into the thick skulls of Spartan landsmen. How harshly, how unmeritedly, did Villeneuve suffer from the lashings of Napoleon’s tongue!

After men and ships comes money. In modern warfare money tends to take the first place, and, above all, money is credit. In the ancient world there was no credit in the modern financial sense. The State imposed taxes, with two preferences, the one for taxing the alien rather than the citizen, the other for indirect over direct taxation. But the State did not borrow at interest from either foreign nations or its own citizens. Recovery after war was an easier matter in consequence. Repayment of the costs of war might be among the terms imposed on the defeated side. But neither victors nor vanquished were burdened with debt charges or the repayment of capital borrowed in the years of stress.

“War,” said King Archidamus bluntly at Sparta when he was urging his people not to be swept away by the excited speeches of their allies, “war is a matter of money. We have no money in our Treasury, and we are never willing to contribute out of our private means.”{64} But when, despite his warnings, Sparta plunged precipitately into war, the lack of money seems never to have distressed her. The Peloponnesian troops received no pay. They went to battle when they were called out, and lived, so far as possible, on the produce and spoil of the enemy’s country. When there was nothing left, they marched off homewards gaily again. The army was disbanded, and off every man went to his farm. It was the duty of the Government not to call men to the colours at a time of year when sowing or harvesting had to be done. This was convenient also to the enemy, but it could really not be helped. No doubt any sustained or continuous military operations were sorely hampered if not altogether frustrated by this simple system of “war finance”. But to the Peloponnesians at least there seemed no other way possible. Hence on the outbreak of war there was no special war taxation imposed. “War needs no fixed charges,” the King himself remarked.{65} This happy-go-lucky casual system worked within its limits quite smoothly for the war on land. Some grandiose schemes for fixed contributions to the war chest or for borrowings on a large scale from the rich shrine of Delphi came to nothing.{66} Occasional demands for money from the allies might be made.{67} But Peloponnesian war finance seems to have been of a quite engaging simplicity. Perhaps Corinth

had to pay her sailors. There is no information about this. Corinth, however, a rich merchant city, could well afford it. It was only in the last years of the war, when a big fleet had to be maintained at a heavy cost, that Sparta found herself in a sorry financial state, and "Persian gold" became the determinant factor of the struggle.

Things at Athens were totally different. The Athenian soldier or sailor expected to be paid, and paid well, when he was on active service. Such service for the fleet might be continuous for six months at least each year. The upkeep of a trireme was certainly as much as six talents a year, and there were the 300 triremes. The entire cost of the war to Athens during the first ten years has been reckoned at 1300 talents annually.{68}

Pericles was the most skilled of financiers. "Wars", he declared, "must be paid for out of capital, not out of forced contributions."{69} For many years before the outbreak of the great war he had been heaping up wealth in the State Treasury. In the happy days of peace the income of Athens may have been upwards of 1000 talents a year. The bulk of it came from the annual tribute exacted from the cities of the Empire. Part of it came from State property (the silver-mines of Laureion in particular), from indirect taxes such as customs dues and law-court charges (the folk were notorious for "loving litigation"), and from taxes on the many aliens living at Athens. The happy citizen paid nothing by way of direct taxation at all. Just when the struggle was about to begin, Pericles made a "financial statement" to his people. It is the most famous "Budget speech" in ancient history.{70} At one time, he declared, there had been as much as 9700 talents reserve fund in the Treasury. At the moment this was reduced to 6000, by the expense of public buildings and the costly siege of Potidaea. (This siege, when later it ended, had cost Athens 2000 talents by itself.{71}) To this capital reserve sum there might be added, he said, another 540 talents' worth of uncoined gold and other precious treasure, available if wanted, even if it came to stripping the gold off the statue of the goddess Athena herself (the odd "40"). And the annual income from tribute was 600 talents, quite apart from the other normal sources of revenue. He was confident they had money enough in plenty to enable them to outlast their enemies' endurance and survive the war, if they were prudent and avoided wild-cat schemes of distant enterprise, which would waste their resources too rapidly.{72} It was an encouraging statement. The flaw in the argument was the entire dependence on the capital reserve fund; for the heavy adverse balance of war expenditure over income must be met from this source primarily, and it was not a bottomless purse. It was found, as the war dragged on its weary length year after year, that the great financial advantage over the enemy

with which Athens certainly had started was rapidly vanishing away. Strenuous efforts had to be made to find new money. In the fourth year of the war a direct property tax (bringing in 200 talents a year) was actually levied then for the first time on the citizens,[{73}] and for the next five years it was re-enacted year by year. The statesmen who succeeded Pericles were brought face to face with serious financial as well as military difficulties. It is part of Cleon's fame, as will appear, that he dealt with these in a drastic fashion.

From the very first, however, it was clear to all concerned that the war was paid for in the main by the "subject-allies" of the Athenian Empire. The greater part of the reserve fund itself consisted of the accumulation of unspent tribute. This tribute made up the greater part of the annual income. None realised this better than the subject-allies themselves. Here, if ever, there was a perfect system of taxation without representation. Discontent and ill-feeling grew stronger year by year. There was constant risk of "secession" even in the days of peace. This risk was at once many times increased upon the outbreak of war. The disaffected looked longingly to Sparta, champion of liberty, to come and help them cut loose from the chains which bound them to the tyrant city Athens. Upon this chance of revolt within the Empire the enemies of Athens rested many hopes. "These are mostly islanders," Archidamus remarked shrewdly. "Where is your fleet to defend them when they have revolted?"[{74}] In actual fact, this thought kept the whole Empire, with one exception, in obedience to Athens, sullen obedience though it was, until a great Spartan soldier, Brasidas, found a way to the north by land, seven years after the beginning of the war. The exception was Lesbos Island which in 428 B.C. dared to revolt, one city only upon it dissenting. This was the more striking because Lesbos still contributed ships of her own to Athens and therefore paid no money tribute. Athens' preparations to subdue the rebels were vigorous, Sparta's efforts to succour them were feeble. In due course the chief city, core of the revolt, Mitylene, was forced to surrender. "They learned nothing from the fate of other rebels," cried Cleon bitterly; "they trusted recklessly to the future. Cherishing hopes which, if less than their wishes, were greater than their powers, they went to war, preferring might to right."[{75}] So, except in the cities of the Thracian coast, where Brasidas wounded Athens in her Achilles-heel, the fate of Mitylene kept the disaffection in the Empire from open outbreak, so long as Athens was undisputed mistress of the Grecian seas. No sooner had the annihilation of her armament at Syracuse cost her this supremacy than, one after another, city after city of the Empire promptly, in the black years 413 and 412 B.C., seceded. It is quite idle to deny Athens' great unpopularity as ruling city. "The revenues of the Athenians are derived from their allies," the envoys of Mitylene at Sparta truly said.[{76}] Hence,

in large measure, came Athens' political weakness as well as that financial strength of which Pericles made boast. No man was more ready to admit than Pericles himself that Athens' Empire was a "tyranny", *i.e.* irresponsible government exercised in the ruler's interest.{77} No man knew better than Pericles himself the risk involved in the hatred that tyranny might breed. Concessions of self-government he would not make. The first use made of such would have been the declaration of complete independence. Such generosity meant the destruction of the Empire from within. He was prepared to pay the price of tyranny, but he knew the peril. The great war was upon them. "Keep your grip of the Empire," he implored his people. "You cannot and dare not relax it."{78} It was not this part of his policy which went unheeded by his successors, however keenly they contended among themselves for the leadership left vacant by the great statesman's death, as Thucydides bitterly declares.{79}

Here, then, was the balance-sheet of strength and weakness at the opening of the war. Sparta immeasurably superior on land, Athens on the sea. Both were able to pay their way for some years of war at least, but a protracted struggle would literally cost Athens much the more. Sparta was at the head of allies who wished her heartily well; Athens was queen of an Empire which was outwardly loyal but honeycombed with ill-will. But Athens could command her allies' instant unquestioning obedience in any enterprise. Sparta's more equal and independent allies could grumble and delay, or even carry a protest through against Sparta's wishes. The one supreme Athenian asset was quick-witted energy; the one Spartan was a dogged courage. Athens had every qualification for a ruling State save two, the power of attraction and the hardihood of persistence in times of depression and discouragement. Sparta was confident of speedy victory, fighting to destroy the rival Empire completely. Athens, reliant on her cause, was at least confident of disappointing the expectations of the enemy, resolute to maintain, perhaps presently to increase, the Empire as the final issue of the war. "We shall survive" was the keynote of all Pericles' encouragements to his people.{80} His successors hoped for more positive fruits of victory.

With all these considerations before him Pericles had to frame his, the first, "strategy" of the war.

### *§ 2. Pericles' "strategy of exhaustion"*

From the very first day of war to the last day of his life, two and a half years later, Pericles played for safety. By disappointing the enemy of their confident expectations of a speedy

victory he hoped to sicken them speedily of a fruitless war, and make them eager to suggest peace instead. That peace would doubtless be on the terms of the *status quo ante bellum.* This would satisfy Pericles and save Athens as an Imperial city. Her wealth could once again be built anew in the years following the short period of war. The foe would have found her impregnable and left her unshaken, still Mistress of the Empire and Queen of the Seas. Pericles' object in the war was strictly "limited", while that of the Spartans was more nearly "absolute", *i.e.* the destruction of the enemy's power.

Pericles' strategy ran as follows.[{81}]

The Athenians were never to offer or accept a chance of battle by land with the Peloponnesian army. No serious resistance was to be offered to an invasion of Attica. The "linked fortress" of Athens-Peiraeus was to be regarded as an island. The countryside must be abandoned, when the enemy came, up to the very walls. "Do not lament over houses and land," Pericles exhorted his fellow-citizens. "If I thought I could persuade you, I would have bidden you yourselves go out and ravage them and so show the Peloponnesians that you will not yield on *their* account at least."[{82}] Only when the enemy went home again was the Athenian army to emerge from its shelter and deal the like treatment to the fields of the Megarians a few miles away.

This was the negative side of the plan of campaign. The positive side was to take the form of operations by sea. The fleet was from time to time to go coasting round the Peloponnese, and small landing parties might do what damage they could to those who lived in scattered hamlets by the seaside. Possibly even an appropriate spot or two off the coast might be occupied as a base for such descents when the fleet had gone home again. Corn-ships coming to Peloponnesian harbours might on rare occasions be caught. But nothing big was to be attempted otherwise, either in expeditions overseas or in the acquisition of new territory. Every island and member of the existing Empire, however, would be carefully kept in its allegiance by the omnipresence of the fleet. And all moneys due were to be exacted rigorously and regularly by the same means.

This strategy, so its author hoped, would quickly exhaust the patience and the resources of the enemy. The war would peter out without decisive result or any great loss of life. A citizen's life was of very great value in the ancient Greek city—particularly where all had equal votes.

This plan of campaign was steadily pursued. Archidamus led his great army into Attica in

431 B.C., praying for the chance of a decisive battle.[83] He found no enemy to fight. It takes two to make a battle. To blockade the strong city was impossible, and to storm it was beyond the wildest hopes of any Spartan. Every year the invasion was repeated, except in 429 B.C. when the Spartans marched north against Plataea instead of wasting their time in Attica,[84] and in 426 B.C. when earthquakes sent the invaders in panic home again from the isthmus of Corinth where they were already mustered in force.[85] The longest time spent in any year by the invaders in Attica was forty days (in 430 B.C.), and the shortest incursion (that of 425 B.C.) lasted fifteen.[86] Only the capture of the Spartan garrison of Sphacteria Island in 425 B.C. stopped their coming. For the Athenians would have put their prisoners instantly to death had the enemy appeared outside the walls. The invading army all these years did just what they liked to the countryside. In the first year, it is true, there were a couple of small cavalry skirmishes at the villages of Rheitoi and Phrygia a few miles from the city, and after this the fear of unexpected sallies by the venturesome Athenian cavalry kept the foe from parading immediately under the city walls. But the rest of Attica lay helplessly exposed to the invaders' plundering.

Twice every year, before the enemy marched into Attica and after they had returned home, Pericles retaliated upon an equally defenceless victim. The whole Athenian land army ravaged the country of the Megarid without opposition from within the unlucky little city or any help to them from their own friends outside. The claims of agriculture, which kept these last busy at home, were paramount.[87]

The Athenians also retaliated by sea. In the first year of the war two naval expeditions were simultaneously sent out from the Peiraeus. The first, a fleet of 100 ships, joined presently by 50 Corcyreans and others, sailed slowly right round the Peloponnese, making hostile descents upon the mainland or adjacent islands in the west at half a dozen places. They captured two towns and won Cephallenia over to the Athenian side. Then this fleet returned.[88] The smaller squadron of 30 ships ravaged the hostile coast of Locris to the north near Thermopylae and seized the small Atalante Island lying off Opus. They left a garrison here to help guard Euboea, an island all but vital to the corn transport and supply to Athens, and so came back home.[89] Next year, 430 B.C., Pericles himself set out in command of a hundred ships. He took on shipboard as many as 4000 hoplites and even 300 cavalry, then for the first time constructing horse transports out of old ships. Fifty more ships, sent by Chios and Lesbos, joined him. It was a great effort. But the expedition was curiously ineffective. Pericles had hopes of taking

the considerable city of Epidaurus, but was beaten off. He then ravaged the lands of three other cities on the Eastern coast of the Peloponnese, and actually took a tiny little Laconian coast town and destroyed it utterly. Then the fleet made for home, never even rounding Cape Malea. {90} He might at least have distracted the thoughts of the men with him from the horror of the plague which then was raging through Athens, had it not also broken out on board his ships and sent him home again. He had not greatly impressed the enemy. For when, oppressed by their many miseries, the Athenians in spite of their statesman sent begging for peace, the Spartans contemptuously rejected the idea.{91} Only two years of war had passed, and Athens already showed signs of weakness. Sparta at least, though robbed of any chance of victory by land, was still quite confident of success. The angry Athenians turned upon the man whom they now regarded as the author of their woes. In vain he exhorted them to endure bravely and with confidence. Endure indeed they needs must, and once again they reconciled themselves to the idea of war. Pericles they fined, then, repenting, made him generalissimo again.{92} It was not for long. In the summer of 429 B.C. the old statesman died of a lingering form of the plague.{93} In recording his death, Thucydides stays his narrative of events to place on record the most striking eulogy which he has admitted to his cold dispassionate narrative.{94} For once the historian's hidden enthusiasm for Pericles breaks out into flame. He was more than justified, the historian declares, in the conviction at which his foresight had arrived, that the Athenians would win an easy victory over the unaided forces of the Peloponnesians. Not even Persian gold would have ruined Athens but for faction within the city. There is no shadow of criticism in the account which Thucydides has given either of Pericles' policy which led up to the war and helped to cause the war, or of the strategy which he invented and directed for the first two and a half years of the struggle. The panegyric is whole-hearted and the more emphatic because the historian so rarely passes judgment of his own, and still more rarely indulges in the luxury of praise.

It is easy to define and classify the Periclean strategy. Certain modern writers of our own day have found it also easy to disparage and to censure it. The approbation of such a historian as Thucydides was bound to be provocative of opposition. Let the squire win his spurs by tilting at the veteran knight, the acknowledged master in the lists of "historiography" All this is to the good. There is but one sure rule. In all history, ancient, modern, ecclesiastical, accept no man's judgment "on authority" without discussion.

### *§ 3. The criticism of Pericles' strategy*

There are two types of strategy.

The first is called the “strategy of annihilation”, the “Niederwerfungs-Strategie” of German military writers. This means the attempt to discover and destroy the main army of the enemy in pitched battle. Strategy has indeed been simply defined just as “the art of bringing the enemy to battle”.{95} Everything else is subordinated to this object. “In spite of the sacrifices which it demands, the great decisive battle must in the future as in the past be our one object.”{96} Troops must not be squandered on minor operations or in “secondary theatres of war”. There must be, in Marshal Foch’s words, an “economy of forces”. Cromwell was a master of this strategy. “Never”, it has been said, “did he besiege a fortress whilst there was an unbeaten enemy in the field.” Such a strategy is the first instinctive desire of every great general. Even though his total forces are badly outnumbered by those of the enemy, he will abandon the hope of bringing the foe to battle only with the greatest reluctance. To fall back behind a Torres Vedras line will save a situation and gain time. It will not win a war.{97} Stonewall Jackson, general of a side all but hopelessly outnumbered from the first, over sixty years ago summed the matter up grimly and strongly.

> “War”, he wrote, “means fighting. The business of the soldier is to fight. Armies are not called out to dig trenches, to throw up breast-works, to live in camps, but to find the enemy and strike him; to invade his country and do him all possible damage in the shortest possible time”{98}

It was by acting on these principles that he and Lee led the Confederate armies in the American Civil War to one amazing victory after another over the giant forces of the Northerners.

“War can never change its character; its true essence is found at all times in the destruction of the live force of both sides.”{99} The trench-warfare of the Great War was stalemate for both sides. The final victory was won when the war of movement became possible again and was directed by Marshal Foch, the one supreme general of the war.

If we revised and re-edited Stonewall Jackson’s words in the light of Periclean land-strategy, they would run:

> “War means no fighting. The business of the soldier is to avoid fighting. Our army is called out to fortify our city and live behind its walls; to avoid the enemy, lest we be struck by him; to let him invade our country and do us all possible damage for so long a time as he may please, provided always that he cannot find our army to fight it.”

Cowardice this is not, but an illuminating example of the second type of strategy, called the

"strategy of exhaustion", the "Ermattungs-Strategie" of the German military writer.{100} It means that by depriving the enemy of every possible opportunity of fighting you on any large scale, you exhaust both his resources and his patience until he becomes ready to make peace.{101}

Obviously this can only be a possible strategy for the weaker side. If adopted by the stronger, it spells mere military lunacy. Politicians of the stronger side who for some inconceivable reasons wish to protract the war might impose it on their generals. The fury of these last can be imagined. But any soldier would accept such a strategy only of bitter necessity, or as a mere temporary device to gain time for mobilisation or reinforcements or to lure the enemy deep into the heart of a hostile land. As a strategy for an entire war even the weaker side must loathe it. For the stronger army it is suicide.

At the beginning of last century the English Government considered it but too likely that a French army of invasion might cross the Channel. In this event they proposed to employ this "strategy of exhaustion". Our own army was to lay waste Sussex, to retreat before the invader, to worry him but *not* to stand and fight. Sir John Moore, that most splendid soldier, was furious. "The plan", he cried, "leads to confusion and despondency...a warfare to which the English are the least adapted. The system should be to head and to oppose, and no foot of ground ceded that was not marked with the blood of the enemy."{102} The most brilliant English military writer of our own day, Lieut.-Col. G. F. R. Henderson, declares that "the records of warfare contain no instance, when two armies were of much the same quality, of the smaller army bringing the campaign to a decisive issue by defensive tactics. Wellington and Lee both fought many defensive battles with inferior forces. But neither of them under such circumstances ever achieved the destruction of their enemy. They fought such battles to gain time, and their hopes soared no higher."{103} After Cannae the Romans adopted the "Fabian" strategy of exhaustion for many weary years, and against a ludicrously weaker side. So great was the effect of Hannibal's genius, so remarkable was the Romans' confession of their tactical and moral inferiority. Thanks to it they recovered from their passing feebleness. It was *not* by its employ that they won the Metaurus battle, invaded Africa, and ended the second Punic War at Zama.

Can the "strategy of exhaustion" ever "win the war"? Of its employ there are two famous instances, the Periclean strategy in ancient history, and Frederick the Great's use of it in modern history. At the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) the King of Prussia found himself threatened by Austrians and Russians in a great superiority of numbers. For two

years he fought battle after battle. He could no longer afford to lose the numbers which his victories cost him. He fell back on the rival strategy. The military folly of the Austrian generals and the lukewarmness of their Russian allies (due to political reasons) allowed him the chance of its use. The Austrians played about, ravaging the country and looking at its fortresses. Frederick skilfully avoided battle. The war "fizzled out" and the Prussian triumphantly escaped from the terrible dangers which had seemed to threaten the weaker side.

Ought Pericles' strategy to have led to a like success for Athens?

In the year 1884 a clever German, J. von Pflugk-Harttung, published at Stuttgart a brochure entitled *Perikles als Feldherr* ("Pericles as General"). Its few pages were devoted to a violent onslaught upon the whole of Pericles' strategy. The writer had the merit of not resting content with a merely destructive criticism. He went on to point out what Pericles ought to have done, but did in fact leave undone. The more serious German historians, Beloch and Holm, have amplified the attack, and, both on its destructive and its constructive side, the pamphlet has been used by others, at times without acknowledgment of indebtedness. For its incisive interest it does merit recognition, appreciation, and discussion.

The writer is scornful of Pericles' "system of boxing-up" his troops, "Das Einkapselungssystem". It ruined the Athenian landowner and peasant, that is, half the State. These losses were quite disproportionate to the petty annoyances inflicted on the foe by the "military promenades round the Peloponnese" which Pericles loved. Such could never reach the heart of the enemy and were futile. All the while Athens' own resources were rapidly draining away. Every year saw the two combatants becoming more and more on an equality in this respect. Athens' original superiority quickly vanished. On heels of the material loss due to the strategy came the moral, and who can say which has the greater weight in war?

This plan of avoiding battle ruined the spirit of the Athenian troops and the temper of the people. Nothing could be so demoralising as this perpetual inactivity in face of the foe. A lost battle would have mattered less. If victory *could* have been won, Sparta in her depression would have been eager for peace. To Athens a defeat on land would not have shaken her hold upon her subject-allies, whom only the sea concerned. It was but fifteen years since the Athenian hoplites had stood up against the Spartan on the battlefield of Tanagra with courage and with honour. Now Pericles constantly preaches to them the inspiring fact that they are quite unfit to meet the enemy in the field. The natural consequences follow; they become quite unfit. They land on the island of Sphacteria to move against a mere handful of Spartans in

overwhelming numbers and in a spirit of slavish fear. Against the Boeotians even, whom their fathers had soundly trounced at Oenophyta, they display contemptible cowardice on the battlefield of Delium. Such were the ripe fruits of Pericles' strategy.

At the outset of the war, the God Apollo at Delphi, through the mouths of his ministers, promised his aid to the Peloponnesians. This particular Apollo had always loved the Dorians best. In the second year of the war the bubonic plague{104} swooped down on Athens. Like the Black Death in the fourteenth century, in which in 1348 Florence lost three-fifths of her inhabitants, Pisa four-fifths, and Siena 80,000 of her folk, or the Great Plague of London in 1666, the pestilence at Athens in 430-429 B.C. is one of the great plagues of all history, as the tale of the pest is one of the grimmest themes of the three great writers, Thucydides, Boccaccio, and Daniel Defoe. Apollo was the God of pestilence. And as the plague left every other part of the Greek mainland unharmed, save Athens only and her camp outside Potidaea, {105} the fundamentalist in Greek religion might have cited this proof of divine intervention triumphantly. But if Greek medical service was still too rudimentary to recognise the fact, it is now quite clear that great part of the ravages of the plague was due simply to the overcrowding of Athens by the refugees from the countryside, and to the lack of sanitation and the virulent infection which this caused. There had been plenty of time and warning before the coming of the plague to make provision against this overcrowding. Pericles did absolutely nothing. No precautions were taken; no accommodation was provided for the refugees. They lay about in every open space. They clustered thickly in every temple and sacred shrine unless stout fastenings could keep them out. They camped out in every turret of the city walls, and spread out in the space between these along the whole distance from Athens to Peiraeus harbour six miles away. They overflooded the harbour town itself. And all the while the blazing sun of a Greek summer beat down upon their heads.{106}

In our own day, the poverty-stricken and miserable Greek Government has at least been grappling bravely with the like disastrous flight to Athens from Smyrna and the Asiatic coasts of the masses of fugitives before the victorious Turk. In Pericles' day, the rich Government did nothing. Why were not the refugees shipped over to neighbouring islands, to Salamis, to Aegina, to Euboea, out of reach of the enemy? Nothing could have been easier. Athens had idle ships enough! All that the monster fleet achieves, besides its foolish raiding, is to take a new army under Hagnon to Potidaea and with it, of course, the plague. The blockading army already there caught the infection from the newcomers. "Hagnon returned with his fleet to Athens,

having lost out of 4000 hoplites a thousand and fifty men in forty days."{107} We can faintly imagine the ghastly scenes in the stricken camp. We cannot estimate fitly the irremediable nature of the disaster of the plague to Athens' military strength for many a year to come, long after the pestilence died down, then broke out once more, and presently vanished altogether. Athens never recovered from the plague. For its ravages Pericles, not Apollo, was responsible. Cowardice and poverty, demoralisation and despondency, these were the results of Pericles' "strategy of exhaustion". Exhaustion in very truth there was, and plenty of it. But it happened to be exhaustion of the wrong side.

The critic turns to the constructive side of his criticism.

Granted even the sorrowful necessity of avoiding battle, there was a simple means of averting the greater part of the evils, namely those which were the direct or indirect results of the invasions and the ravaging of Attica.

In the first place, was it quite impossible to "block the Geranea passes"? The ridge of Mount Geranea stretched 8 miles across the Isthmus of Corinth, rising to a height of 4000 feet and more. It is crossed or turned by three tracks alone. On the north the route skirting the Corinthian gulf ran from Aegosthena by Pagae, port of Megara, and by Megarian Oenoe to Corinth. This way never touched Attica. On the south, skirting the waters of the Saronic Gulf, ran the famous narrow track of the Scironian Way, hewn in the cliffs 600 feet above the sea, from Corinth to Megara itself. Hadrian it was, 500 years later, who first built a carriage way here. Then from Megara a broad high road crossed the Attic frontier to Eleusis. Between the two coast ways a mountain track in the centre of the isthmus led from Corinth by Tripodiscus to Megara. Brasidas used this track when in 424 B.C. he rushed to save Megara from falling into the hands of Athens.{108}

Clearly, however, the "Geranea passes" could only be "blocked" if the Athenians acquired Megara and Pagae. The unhappy plight of Athenian garrisons perched precariously at Tripodiscus and Megarian Oenoe, with a hostile Megara and Pagae cutting them off from Attica, and with the Peloponnesian army of invasion advancing from Corinth can be imagined. Pericles was certainly doing his feeble best all the while to get hold of Megara. Meanwhile, it must be conceded regretfully that the invasions could not be stopped by "blocking the Geranea passes".

But is there not more hope of a "fort scheme" in Attica itself? The Spartans were

notoriously incapable of siege-operations. They never *could* carry a fortified position, however small, by storm. Their failures at Mycale and Ithome long ago, at Plataea in this very opening stage of the great war, and, later, at Pylos were almost ludicrous. They admitted this serious flaw in their military skill themselves. Forts were as great stumbling-blocks to them as ever were those "ugly things" the Conqueror's Norman Castles to the rebellious Saxons in East Anglia and the fens of Cambridgeshire.{109} There was another little Oenoe in the hills on the north-west frontier of Attica, just north of the road running south from Platea by Eleutherae to Eleusis. Archidamus invading Attica for the first time at head of his large and invincible army-tarried here some while, turning aside to assault the tiny fortress. Perhaps he misliked the notion of an Athenian garrison, however small, upon one of his lines of communication. Perhaps he thought it a useful preliminary towards the complete investment of Plataea. For the Athenians had pledged themselves to come to that heroic little city's help, and might naturally march this way. The Spartan did not realise that Pericles would not lift a finger to redeem his promise. Perhaps, as his critics said at the time, the King was wilfully wasting time to let the Athenians repent of their obstinacy, when they saw the peril at their very doors, and so even at the eleventh hour submit. The King's whole heart was never in the war. Whatever his reason, Archidamus spent many days at Oenoe, all the while the country folk of Attica were busy carrying their precious goods, so far as possible, unhindered within the safety of the walls of Athens. The wee fort held out desperately. It defied every effort to take it by storm. Presently the invading army sulkily left it alone, and marched on to its easier task of ravage and plunder of the undefended countryside.{110}

Here was a model for the hampering and the worrying of invaders! Why did not Pericles establish many another Oenoe in the threatened land? There were many admirable sites for forts, especially on the northern frontier, where the few roads crossed the great mountain rampart of Cithaeron and Parnés. Such a site was Eleutherae itself, on the Eleusis-Plataea road, which would also block the Megarian northern gate by Pagae-Aegosthena. Another was Phyle, on the direct road from Athens to Thebes. A third was Decelea, on the north road from Athens to Oropus and the eastern boundary of Boeotia. To have guarded her northern frontier effectively by these three forts might at least have stopped any Boeotian co-operation with their Peloponnesian allies, and kept the northern army penned within its own borders. This must in itself have been the greatest gain to Athens. For the southern army relied for its cavalry at least almost entirely on its northern allies. Forts just south of the frontier watershed, where military science must place them,{111} would stop the pincers from closing on Attica.

But what in effect was done? Eleutherae was never fortified. Phyle was garrisoned only at the very end of the long war. Decelea presently *was* fortified—by the enemy! Apart from the plucky small Oenoe just one other Athenian fort is mentioned, quite in passing, that of Panactum, an isolated mountain station a few miles east of Oenoe. It was "betrayed to the Boeotians" in 422 B.C.[{112}] Thereafter Panactum figured largely in the political disputes of the following years. Its military service to Athens earlier is not apparent.

Forts then and plenty of them, here and elsewhere, with active vigorous garrisons, always on the watch to make forays, cut off stragglers, "pinprick" the invaders, intercept supplies, worry the foe on every possible occasion—this was what, defensively, was wanted. The first invasion doubtless—at least from the south—must have come. The enemy might have thought twice before repeating such a doubtful and costly experiment.

Who would not commend such a "fort scheme"? And Pericles does—nothing!

It was somewhat feebly suggested by an Oxford writer thirty years ago that Pericles did in fact at first contemplate some such plan of the kind, but was scared off when the Spartans showed signs of intending to capture Plataea by more active devices than those of mere blockade.[{113}] As the Spartan attempt to storm Plataea proved a dismal failure, the suggestion of Pericles' fright limps badly. Chronologically, too, it is not helpful. For the Spartan attack on Plataea took place many months after the beginning of the war. We cannot excuse Pericles' neglect of the "fort scheme" by such laboured apologies.

Lastly, to a sounder defence by land there might well have been added a more spirited offence by sea. Constant descents upon the enemy's coasts; a never-ceasing activity; houses in flames all over the Peloponnese; the helots encouraged to a servile war; the foe hurrying in bewilderment from place to place; a hundred thousand men hurled against Megara while the slow Spartans are arming; then at Thebes in safety—we become breathlessly excited at the glorious opportunities of ruthless war. Whereas, in fact, Pericles' men spend the long summer weeks placidly gazing over their walls, admiring the smoke of their burning farms rising up to heaven. O for a man, a soldier, at head of the Athenian State, instead of this timid and respectable Bürgermeister!

"Themistocles made a weak State strong. Pericles set a strong State upon the downward path. His is the brilliance of a sun setting amid the clouds of a gathering storm, the Louis XIV. of Athens. Thucydides, who alone of his contemporaries writes well of him, is a mere

advocate belonging to his Party.

> What counter can be made to this spirited attack on Pericles' strategy?"[{114}]

The exaggerations in its constructive scheme of offence are obvious. Its plea for more vigorous action is sound. The "fort scheme" of defence is doubtful. The lament over the ill effects of Pericles' strategy upon the morale of his troops is justified. These ill effects cannot be denied. "May fortune preserve you from adopting a defensive attitude," once wrote Carnot to Jourdan, "the courage of your troops will weaken and the audacity of the enemy will increase beyond all measure." It was at least in loyalty to their tradition of Revolutionary and Napoleonic days that the French hurled themselves upon Alsace at the opening of the Great War when every available man was needed for defence in the north. Imperfectly informed, however, as to the strength of the German armies, they seized an apparent chance of a counterstroke aimed at the enemy's communications all the more gleefully surely because it was a vigorous offensive movement.

The "fort scheme" loses its superficial charm upon further thought. "He who strives to protect everything protects nothing "runs the modern military maxim. But in ancient Greek warfare such a scheme had very particular disadvantages beyond this common one of uselessness. In modern warfare the capture of prisoners in large numbers is viewed with comparative equanimity by the nations at war. Harper's Ferry falls, but Abraham Lincoln will not ransom his 12,500 soldiers by granting peace. The small ancient city state in Greece set a far higher value upon the life and liberty of its citizen soldiers. To redeem her prisoners after the defeat of Coronea in 446 B.C. Athens surrendered all her "land Empire" north of Attica. Two hundred and ninety-two soldiers were, in 425 B.C., taken alive on Sphacteria Island. Only 120 of these were Spartans.[{115}] Athens can have peace at any moment afterwards for their exchange. Pericles aimed at nothing better than what Beloch harshly labels a "rotten peace on the terms of the *status quo*".[{116}] Sphacteria gave his energetic successors hopes of a greater and more positive gain from the war. So great was the effect of the capture of a mere handful of prisoners. Isolated forts in Attica meant as many deep anxieties as there were forts. At any moment it might seem required to march out in force to relieve the threatened garrison, unless Athens was willing to abandon this to captivity or death. Fight a pitched battle the Athenians could *not*. What, then, must happen to the forts? The ultimate fate of Plataea was certain, however heroic the little city's resistance when no relieving army came to its succour.

Eleutherae—Phyle—Decelea? Was Athens to have a Kimberley, a Mafeking, a Ladysmith planted permanently upon her northern frontier? There was always the risk of treachery, as the fate of Panactum showed. “The history of entrenched camps is almost a history of capitulations,” said the German Moltke, victor over France in 1870.{117} “It is an axiom of the art of war”, Napoleon declared, “that he who remains behind his entrenchments is beaten.” Sedan, Metz, Port Arthur preach the same lesson. Verdun of immortal memory is no disproof of the danger to a defence scheme of isolated forts. For the great fortress was but one link in an unbroken chain.

And yet—a criticism of Pericles surely remains possible.

“We should not”, wrote Sir John Moore, “shut up our force in detached garrisons which, by depriving us of a disposable force, prevent our deriving the advantages of our naval superiority to act offensively.”{118} In this pregnant sentence may be found the key to unlock the essential vice of Pericles’ strategy, even though we reject the “fort scheme” in which he never could indulge.

He used his army against Megara and against Potidaea. The former was a sound plan in itself, but failed continually. The latter was a wicked waste of troops upon a secondary operation of war.

He used his fleet to small purpose. These naval parades round the Peloponnese were extraordinarily futile. The Athenian admiral Tolmides had won much fame by a circumnavigation of the kind in the earlier war with the Peloponnesians, and Pericles now, a quarter of a century later, attached far too great a value to his recollection of Tolmides’ voyage and its results. His own second year’s expedition with troops on board did win some successes. But it was a half-hearted business, and the whole expedition quickly retired.

What Pericles should have done at the very outset was to seize Cythera with the fleet—a feat performed without difficulty by Nicias in 424 B.C.{119}—and then use his ships to transport a strong expeditionary land army there. A descent in force upon the southern Laconian coast would have brought the Spartans at top speed from Attica, had they ever dared leave their own unwalled city for the north. If the Athenians, threatened by the approach of the enemy in large numbers, dared not fight, the fleet gave their expeditionary force a mobility denied to the enemy, and a second invasion of Messenia by 10,000 good troops would have kept the Spartans too busy at home to indulge their taste for forays into Attica. This was the true

defence of Attica, the conjoint use of fleet *and army* in great operations against the enemy's own land. By itself, the fleet could achieve little or nothing by way of offence unless the enemy fleet would come out to fight it, than which nothing was more remote from the enemy's intentions. An English General has recently declared that he knew of no example in history of a fleet, without the aid of land forces, capturing a large area of continental territory where there was a strong hostile army.{120} Certainly the Athenian fleet could achieve nothing of the least value against Laconia without a strong Athenian army on board of it. The war was to be won by the "disposable use" of the army in Laconia made possible by the fleet, and not by sedentary troops at home. This was the proper offensive use of Athenian sea-power, just as it was the inestimable service of the British Navy in the Peninsular War of 1808 and following years.{121} Moore's small army of less than 30,000 men, plunging into north-west Spain in the Corunna campaign of 1808-1809, "gave the lockjaw", as Napoleon himself said, to himself and his plans for the conquest of Portugal.{122} The English army saved itself because it was based upon the fleet, when the French legions twice its strength hurried to destroy it. In like manner, an Athenian army of 10,000 men based on Cythera and the fleet would have given the lockjaw to the Peloponnesian hopes of speedy victory by the invasion of Attica. And it would have saved the homeland from all the grievous hurts which did in fact result from Pericles' inactivity and misuse of the land army.

Doubtless much more might have been done, when Attica *was* invaded, to worry the invaders by a proper and vigorous use of the Athenian cavalry and light-armed skirmishers. An earlier Iphicrates or an Athenian Stuart would have given the enemy many an anxious night of it, and their lot would have been far less happy a one than it was. Something greater even than such activity might have been attempted. An invading army which lives on the countryside must, at times, be somewhat dispersed through sheer necessity of foraging. The weakness and incapacity of the French armies on many occasions in the Peninsular War drive this lesson home again and again. A Wellington in Athens might have seized his opportunity and, even with inferior numbers, have dealt Archidamus so staggering a blow in pitched battle that the invaders would have gone reeling back in disorder and rout to the frontier again. But Pericles was certainly no Wellington, and there was a miserable lack of enterprise in the Athenian higher military command from the first. But the root criticism of "Pericles as General" is his failure to use his sea-power properly, *i.e.* in conjunction with and not as an alternative to the army.

Three reasons combined to explain this his failure.

The first may be called the “fascination of insularity”. “Athens an island.” It was a fatal phrase. For no strategy could make her such.

The second was that “dread of the Casualty list” which has cost so many lives needlessly in war. A recent writer on Italian activities in North Africa has remarked that

> “military opinion chafed under the restrictions which are believed to have been imposed for political reasons, and the impossibility of bringing the war to an end by purely defensive methods was finally recognised. Italian opinion did realise that in order to make omelettes it is necessary to break eggs, while for a considerable time the authorities appeared to be searching for a substitute.”{123}

And the general who is also a politician directly responsible to an excitable people for the loss of life which he incurs in battle has many special reasons for hesitation. Marlborough at Malplaquet was credited with the lowest motives in his ruthless sacrifice of his men. The battle added little to his reputation.{124} Grant, in the Wilderness and afterwards, knew that he could spare four men for every one of Lee’s, and eventually won fame with victory by what else had been a callous and brutal expenditure of life. The disappointingly meagre results of Haig’s “Battle of the Somme” have been at times ascribed to this same cause, the dread of the casualty list. “The War should have ended in 1917,” it has been said. But perhaps the politician rather than the soldier was responsible for the delay. A surer instance is the campaign in Natal in 1900 when the English general failed to achieve decisive results, and his failure must be ascribed to this shrinking from casualties. So in the end a larger toll in soldiers’ lives was paid. “In war”, comments the German cold dispassionate and expert critic upon this campaign, “some sacrifices must be made, and the anxiety of commanders to curtail their casualty lists will only increase the number.”{125} It is often the hideous truth. It was never realised by the Athenians. The one great chance they had of acquiring Megara in 424 B.C. was let slip because their generals dared not push their initial advantage home.{126} Loss of life in the field might mean prompt trial at home for the Athenian general who could be held responsible for such sacrifice of his fellow-citizens. Hence came much of the weak generalship, the feeble leadership, which Athenian generals displayed again and again in the war. The Athenian jury had no mercy. Pericles himself could hardly escape with his life when fields and buildings were offered up to the enemy. He dared not run the risk of imperilling an expeditionary force on a great scale in enemy’s territory.

And on top of all comes the fact that Pericles himself was rather an Admiral than a General. His own successes in war had been won upon the sea in old days. In command of the fleet he had made long voyages. He had never faced a resolute foe on land. Hence he disparaged and distrusted an army which he knew to be inferior in numbers to the enemy. And by this fatal distrust he deprived that very fleet in which he took such pride of its best chance of service in the war, reducing its use to raids as futile as ever were those over the Great Lakes in the Canadian War of 1812. The Athenian Admiralty it was which framed the strategy at outset of the war. Not Pericles the Bürgermeister but Pericles the Admiral invented the "strategy of exhaustion", a strategy which came near to ruining Athens in a couple of years and could never have won her the victory. It needed the enterprise and vigour of younger men to frame and execute a second "strategy of offence" which might promise happier results. Our admiration for Pericles' character and work of many years for his City and her Empire must not deprive the mere rude politician Cleon and his soldier colleague Demosthenes of our praise for their sounder military judgment and strategical insight, when presently, some years after the old statesman's death, the control of military and naval operations passed into their eager hands.

But Pericles died in 429 B.C. It is not until two years later that the vigorous Cleon, son of Cleaenetus, makes his first appearance in the pages of Thucydides. And it was first in the following year, 426 B.C., that, as will be seen, he and the able general, Demosthenes, infused life and vigour into Athens' military policy. Meanwhile the Athenian ship of State lay in the doldrums. It is in these intervening years that the most dismal fruits of the Periclean defensive strategy were reaped. The fate of Athens' loyal small ally Plataea was the heaviest price paid for this strategy, albeit it was not paid by the Athenians themselves in anything else save in honour.

### *§ 4. The price of the strategy: Plataea*

For some eighty or ninety years before the outbreak of the great war the small city of Plataea in the south of Boeotia had been allied to Athens upon terms of closest friendship. In the wars and contentions between Athens and the Boeotian Confederacy under the leadership of Thebes Plataea's sympathies had never failed the Athenians. Steadfastly she refused to join the other cities of Boeotia and make one of their Confederacy. The Spartan King Cleomenes, it is said, had first advised her to appeal to Athens for aid against her neighbours with the direct intention of creating a lasting feud between Athens and Thebes. His foresight was remarkable, and so justified by events during all the years that followed that he may have been given credit

for an idea which never really entered his head when he gave Plataea the famous advice. However this may be, the alliance between Athens and Plataea did take place in 509 B.C. (or 519 B.C.) and remained unbroken to the end.{127} And as generation followed generation, the proud and morose Thebans, citizens of a far greater city, hated the Plataeans with an ever-increasing spite. In the Persian invasion of Greece the Plataeans had fought for the cause of liberty, the Thebans had sided with the barbarian. Outside the walls of Plataea had been fought the last great land battle of the Persian wars. In the market-place of Plataea Pausanias the Spartan, on the morrow of the victory, had offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving to Zeus the Liberator, and in the name of every city which had fought for freedom had declared Plataea forever free and independent and inviolate against attack.{128} Proud of her traditions, loyal to her friendship with Athens, the little city defied her grim neighbour, Thebes, from which but seven miles of open plain and the small Asopus river separated her.

It was the first watch of a black and moonless night in the early spring of the year 431 B.C., following a stormy day. Rain still poured down in torrents, and the Asopus rolled its swollen waters sluggishly seawards. A little knot of traitor Plataeans clustered at the north gate of Plataea in the dark. The gate swung open, and there rushed in a body of some 300 fully armed Theban warriors to seize the city for Thebes. There was as yet no war in Greece. The Treaty of 445 B.C. had still fifteen years to run. The cities were uneasy and arming. War was in the air. But the Theban surprise of Plataea was, in the historian's words, a "shining breach" of the treaty.{129}

There was wild panic in the city. At first the citizens submitted to make terms. Then they rallied. First one, then a second, messenger hurried over the mountains through the darkness of the night to Athens. In the city itself the men mustered and in the blackest hour of the night, just before dawn, sallied out from the houses and fell fiercely upon the intruders. The enemy for a while, closing their ranks, made a stout resistance. At last they broke and fled. Up and down the narrow streets, as the rain poured down, the pitiless chase went on. The city's gates were closed. The strangers had no knowledge of the ways. Many fled into a building abutting on the city wall, whose gates they thought to be the city's, and were trapped. A woman in her mercy gave an axe to one other small party. They hewed through the bar of a deserted postern, and so escaped into the country. The rest were slain in house, courtyard, and alley, or taken alive.

Up to the city walls there marched a great Theban army. The flooded river had delayed their coming. The soldier's "fifth element", mud, had fought against them. As one of General Grant's

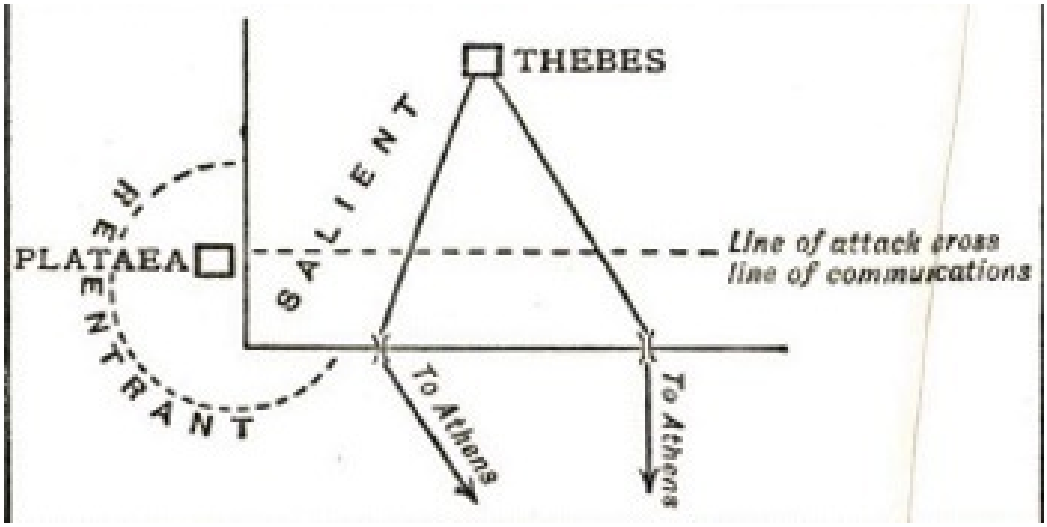
scouts reported to him in the “Campaign of the Wilderness”, “he guessed the road was there all right, but the bottom had fallen out”. The Theban army had meant to enter the city hard upon the heels of the 300. Now they found it alert, impregnable. A message reached them. Let them retire at once from Plataean territory, and touch no single thing therein, and they should have their prisoners back. So the Plataeans took solemn oath. The army marched away. The citizens hastily carried all their goods to safety behind their city walls. Then, in cold blood, they slew their captives, 180 in number, and sent word again to Athens. The herald presently arriving from this city with urgent bidding to keep their prisoners alive found the men dead.

It was a savage retaliation for a dastardly attack. The Plataeans denied the Theban story of the promise sworn to the army to give them the captives back. They quibbled about its terms. They denied at least that they had taken solemn oath. Treachery on the one side, bad faith upon the other, such were the fruits of a century of hatred. There would at least bescanty mercy for Plataea if the foe ever took the city. The non-combatants, the old and feeble, the women and the children, were sent off to Athens, under escort of an Athenian army, which marched at once to help the city. The harvest, with Athenian aid, was gathered within its walls. A sturdy garrison of Plataean and Athenian troops remained to guard it against its deadly foes, now for ever pitiless.[{130}]

The entry of the Thebans into Plataea was the first act of the great war. From this incident that war’s events are dated. Some eighty days later the Spartan army began to ravage Attica. The Boeotians already had been wreaking their vengeance on the countryside up to Plataea’s walls, ravening round these like wolves. War had long been threatening. It became inevitable in very truth on that dark night of storm and massacre.

Vile though the Thebans’ attempt was to take Plataea by betrayal and surprise, they had the soundest strategical reasons for desiring to be masters of the city before the coming war broke out.

Plataea was built immediately under the steep rocky northern slopes of Cithaeron, and only a few yards separated its southern wall from the beginning of the rising ground. It was thus, as it were, a low-lying bastion thrust out from the line of the Athenian frontier and a most admirable point of observation of all movements in Boeotia. In the hands of an enterprising folk indeed it might have given Athens the one chief advantage of what is called a “Re-entering” frontier against Thebes, that of threatening the line of communications of a hostile force advancing from the “salient” against a side of the “Re-entrant”—thus:




There were but two passes over the mountain barrier from Thebes to Athens, the one by Eleutherae, the other the direct and more easterly pass by Phyle. A Boeotian army of invasion by either route obviously exposed its flank and its communications to a hostile force operating from Plataea. And, more important still, on the western side of the city Plataea could threaten the one and only road linking the Isthmus with Boeotia, that by Aegosthena, which did not pass through Attica. In the whole land strategy of the Peloponnesian side in the great war, this connection between the Spartans in the south and their Boeotian allies in the north was of the most vital importance. Pagae and Megara in Athenian hands would have blocked it. But despite Athens' efforts Megara held by Sparta. Beyond Pagae, however, there lay upon the flank of the road as it turned the end of Cithaeron the hostile city of Platea. This Aegosthena route was in constant use by the Peloponnesians. An active enemy in Plataea not only threatened any Theban invasion of Attica, but imperilled the whole co-operation of Athens' northern and southern enemies. There were the most admirable strategic reasons for Thebes' attempt to get hold of Plataea before the war began, added on top of all the political and "personal" reasons. It is only the Thebans' method of the attempt which exposes them to a lively condemnation at which the Greek of the time himself would probably have been mildly amused.

It remains the fact that Athens did not play the part of an "active enemy" at Plataea. Passively she let the place be taken, after long and direful siege, to her eternal dishonour. But at the outset of the war the Thebans were not justified in relying upon the supine and inglorious inactivity of the Athenian army. Nor did they so rely. On the contrary, there is a curious bit of evidence lately discovered which shows that the Thebans were alarmed at the risk of an

Athenian invasion of their own land, and cleared their defenceless village folk from the countryside into the city. “As soon as war between the Athenians and the Lacedemonians began”, says a newly-found writer (probably Cratippus by name, in the generation after Thucydides), “the Thebans made a great advance towards complete prosperity. For when the Athenians commenced to ‘threaten’ Boeotia, the inhabitants of Erythrae, Scaphae, Scolus, Aulis, Schoenus, and Potniae, and many other similar places which had no walls, congregated at Thebes, thus doubling the size of that city.”{131} The three villages first named lay south of the Asopus quite near Plataea. Aulis lay on the coast and might fear raids by the enemy’s fleet. But Schoenus and Potniae lay respectively six and one and a half miles to the north of Thebes. The Boeotians were in apprehension of an Athenian army of invasion. To that army Plataea would have been of the greatest possible value. That army never came. The Thebans were soldiers and considered what Pericles’ strategy might be. They came presently to realise all too clearly what in fact that strategy was.

For every possible military and political reason, therefore, the Thebans must get hold of Plataea. The attempt was made and miscarried. One great final motive, that of revenge, was now added to the rest.

It was not until the third year of the great war, that of 429 B.C., that the Thebans secured Spartan help against the hated city. In that summer King Archidamus with his army of invasion swerved aside from Attica and came down by Aegosthena upon Plataea. The garrison at once protested. He was outraging Pausanias the Spartan’s own promise to Plataea of independence for all time. The old soldier king was moved by an appeal which touched Spartan honour very closely. “The liberty you are guaranteed”, he replied, “would be best used in helping others to regain their own, in joining us now in our fighting for the liberation of Greece.” But none the less Archidamus made the Plataeans an offer which must have infuriated his valuable Theban allies. Make it, however, he did. “If you prefer to be neutral,” he said, “and we have already made you this offer once before, keep your lands, receive both sides in peace, but neither for any purposes of war, and we shall be satisfied.”{132}

Many years later the Athenian fleet came down upon the helpless little island of Melos. The Melians pleaded for just this same privilege of neutrality. The Athenians rejected the plea contemptuously. Might is always right, they said. Join us or take the consequences. The islanders trusted to the justice of the gods and perished for their trust.{133} Archidamus was more generous. To Plataea in its extremity he made the offer of neutrality.

In July 1914 the German Emperor made his offer of “neutrality” to Belgium in her peril. This offer was for his own “purposes of war”, that the huge German invading army might rush down unopposed by the shortest route upon France’s northern frontier. Belgium refused. The Germans crossed the Belgian frontier against their plighted troth, gained their immediate military purpose, lost their honour and the war.

The Plataeans answered Archidamus, pleading that their wives and children were at Athens. They must get Athenian sanction. Moreover, even so, they feared that, when the Spartans had gone, they “might not be allowed to observe the terms proposed”. Athens might come and prevent it. Thebes might try once more treacherously to seize the town when “received in peace”.

The Spartan king saw reason in their fears. In answer, he made a remarkable suggestion, wanting, says Thucydides, to reassure them.

> “Then hand over your city and houses to us Spartans,” he said. “Mark the boundaries of your land, and number your fruit-trees and anything else which can be counted. Go yourselves whithersoever you please while the war lasts. When the war is over, we will give back to you all that we have received. Meanwhile we will hold your property in trust, cultivate your land, and pay you whatever rent contents you.”{134}

It was an honest and surely a tempting offer to the little company of 400 Plataeans left in the town. And the king granted them a truce that they might send messengers to Athens. Given Athens’ consent, they said, they would do as he advised. Never was ancient city more loyal to her troth than was the heroic little city of Plataea. Until the messengers returned, the Spartan army lay quietly outside the city walls, and refrained from any hurt.

The messengers came back, bearing this answer with them:

> “Men of Plataea, the Athenians say that never at any time since you first became their allies have they suffered any man to do you wrong. They will not forsake you now, but will help you to the utmost of their power. And they conjure you, by the oaths which your fathers swore, not to forsake the alliance.”{135}

Never was promise of help more plainly given.

So the Plataeans resolved not to desert the Athenians, but rather to look on patiently at the wasting of their lands, if so they must, and to endure whatever else might befall. They made answer from the walls that they could not do what the Lacedemonians proposed.

Then Archidamus the king first of all cried upon the Gods and Heroes of the country, calling

them to witness, and saying,

> "O ye Gods who possess the land of Plataea and ye Heroes, be ye our witnesses that neither at the first came we unjustly against this land wherein our fathers, calling in prayer upon you, overcame the Medes, yea and you granted the land a fair field of victory to the Hellenes. For it is these folk who have first been false to the oaths then sworn. Neither now, if we do aught, shall we do injustice. For first we have made them many and fair offers and we fail to win them to consent. Be gracious now to us, and grant that they who first began the wrong may be punished for their iniquity, and that they may obtain vengeance who seek it lawfully."{136}

So the garrison, 400 Plataeans, 80 Athenians, and 110 women kept to bake bread for the defenders, were straitly shut in, and the long siege began.

It lasted for two years. At first the Spartans made the most vigorous efforts to carry the city by storm. Their siege engines were destroyed and their storming parties were hurled back. They desisted sullenly, and fell to a blockade. Their entrenchments encompassed the city. Month after month passed by. No succour reached the beleaguered garrison from outside. In the second winter of the siege, food began to fail the garrison. They planned to escape, if it might be, scaling by night the enemy's great double wall which ringed them round. The hearts of some failed them at the last. Two hundred and twenty made the desperate attempt on a moonless night of furious wind and rain which turned to snow. They planted their ladders, scaled the walls, and dropped down on the other side to the fosse. This was filled with water, and its surface was covered with a thin layer of ice. The enemy were upon them and the fight raged by torchlight. The Plataeans struggled through the deep half-frozen water, the ice giving way beneath them, and gained the farther bank. One archer only had been taken at the fosse, and seven men more had turned back to the city. Two hundred and twelve made good their escape and fled over the mountains to Athens.{137}

The blockade went on. Not until they were starving did the end come, yet many months later. The last crust of bread was eaten. The remnant of the garrison were too weak to man the walls. One assault must have carried the city. The enemy's commander held back his men. Sparta preferred the city's voluntary surrender to its capture. For if surrendered, it might be exempt from any later terms of peace requiring the giving back of places taken by force of arms. The defenders were invited to deliver themselves up to the mercy of the Spartans. "The guilty should be punished, but no man without just cause." On these terms they capitulated. Plataea had fallen at last.{138}

Five men came from Sparta to "judge" the prisoners on the spot. There was a mere mockery

of a trial. The Thebans demanded the glutting of their vengeance. The Spartans dared not deny their allies the sweets of revenge. Archidamus was dead, and lesser men commanded in his place. There was a streak of old Phoenician cruelty in the Theban nature. The long speeches recorded or invented by Thucydides do but needlessly protract the agony. Sentence was given. The men, 200 Plataeans and 25 Athenians, were executed at once: their women were made slaves. When another year had passed, the Thebans destroyed the city to its foundations. Amid its ruins they erected one huge caravanserai for travellers and a temple for the Goddess Hera. For forty years the city site lay desolate, and all Plataeans left alive were exiles from their home.{139}

In the most famous of all *Punch's* cartoons of the Great War, that of October 21, 1914, the artist shows the two monarchs together, the German who offered neutrality, the Belgian who refused. "So, you see," the Kaiser taunts, "you've lost everything." To whom King Albert: "Not my soul." The Plataean boys in their refugees' home at Athens or at Scione later,{140} like the Belgian boys in England, had their inheritance, the memory of faith kept, of desperate courage defiant of overwhelming odds. Can a father leave his son a nobler gift?

But what of Athens and *her* honour? What of her solemn adjuration to the Plataeans to stand fast, of her own pledge to send all the help she could? How was the pledge redeemed?

Nearly thirty years ago a sheet of ancient papyrus, sold in Cairo market in 1898, came to Strasburg University library. A most ingenious German editor proclaimed it to contain notes of novelties found by some surprised student of Nero's days in an unknown Greek historian of the fifth century B.C. One mutilated fragment, two incomplete lines in length, talks of an Athenian expedition sent at three days' notice to the help of—someone or other, of "men being warred on." Then the word "Thebans" follows, and then comes another gap. Could it be that the men warred on were the Plataeans, and those who made the war the Thebans? *Did* the Athenians send out a force to attempt to redeem their pledge? Does the unknown historian fill up a gap in Thucydides' story, and the student take special note of the fact as he read the unknown's pages in Egypt five centuries later?{141}

A second still more learned German tracked the matter home and tore his compatriot's whole fantasy ruthlessly to shreds. It turned out to be a "nightmare's nest". These fragments of papyrus are but sorry notes upon one of Demosthenes' orations, that against Androtion. They tell us nothing new. The Athenians did send help under Timotheus in 357 B.C.—to Euboeans—and let their enemies the Thebans depart in peace.{142} No light is thrown here by any flickering

Egyptian Will-o'-the-wisp upon the darkness of the Athenian dishonour seventy years earlier. Had, perhaps, the dying Pericles roused himself to bid his citizens give Plataea the pledge? It was given before he died. Had he lived, might the army have crossed Cithaeron in the early autumn instead of ravaging Megara's fields again? Pericles lay dead, and the pledge was not redeemed. After the two years' siege, Plataea fell. But would Pericles himself have made any attempt to save the town? His own strategy forbade it. Silence settles down upon this black page in Athenian history. It is time to lay aside the story of Plataea, lover of Athens. *Satis legisti.*

### *§ 5. The greatness of Pericles*

And yet, over all Athenians of all time there towers this one superb figure of Pericles, patriot and orator. His mistakes may be forgotten. He himself is enshrined forever in the memory of mankind. For Athens, his city, he had that passionate devotion which some few great men in every land have felt for their country, but none have felt it in greater measure.[{143}] It was this passion of adoration which inspired him eighteen months before his death and breathes through every sentence of the speech which he was then called on to deliver in honour of the Athenian dead who, in the first year of the war, had laid down their lives for their city. The "Funeral Oration" of Pericles is the one unrivalled masterpiece of the whole of ancient oratory. "Athens our Country is worthy her sons' devotion. How can they be more fitly praised than by praising her?"

> "So when the moment came, these men were minded to stand and suffer rather than by yielding to save their lives. They fled from dishonour: on the field of battle their feet stood fast, and in an instant, at the crisis of fate, they passed away from the scene, not of terror, but of glory.
>
> "Such was the end of these men. They were worthy of Athens. I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, and become her lovers; and when you see her glory, reflect that this Empire has been won by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it; who in action feared dishonour; who, should they ever be worsted in an enterprise, freely gave their lives to their country as the fairest feast offering which they could make her.
>
> "So they received again each one for himself the praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres —I speak not of that wherein their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives in everlasting remembrance, recalled always as every chance of word or deed may serve.
>
> For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men. Not only are they commemorated by graven stones in their own country, but far away in alien lands there lives also an unwritten memorial of them, set in the hearts of men."

Then after a few brief words of consolation to the kinsfolk, the parents, sons, brothers, and

womenfolk of the fallen, the great orator ends quietly with the thought of the children bereft of the father's care:

"The dead have been interred with honour. It remains only that their children should have maintenance from the city until they are grown. This is the prize with which Athens crowns her sons after a struggle like theirs. For where valour has the greatest rewards, there the noblest citizens are enlisted in the service of their Country.

"And now, when you have duly mourned, each his own, depart."{144}

Once again, and perhaps once only in the long annals of the years, has an orator on the like occasion rivalled, or it may be surpassed, the greatest of the Athenians. To the English public schoolman or University student Abraham Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, is too little known, one of his own blood though the speaker is. On the very field of battle, where four months earlier, there had raged that tremendous three days' struggle, so heroic, so glorious to both sides, in which over 40,000 men were killed or wounded and two great armies "tore themselves to pieces", the President of the Republic spoke so simply, so earnestly, so greatly, that his words have sunk deep into the hearts of all the English-speaking peoples, however widely sundered by the seas:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Here once more it is the larger ideal, the nation and that for which it stands, which consecrates the individual soldier's life and death.

This ideal of liberty—to what has it not moved men?

A year and a half later, in his "Second Inaugural" on March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln once again encouraged his war-weary people to endure to the end. Six weeks later the President

was foully murdered, to the irreparable loss of the victors in the war, loss in honour, loss in wisdom, loss in magnanimity. Pericles too, shortly before his death, had striven a second time to encourage his faltering citizens to persist.

"The visitations of heaven", he cried, "must be borne with resignation; the sufferings inflicted by an enemy with manliness. This has always been the spirit of Athens. Let it not die out in you. Our city has the greatest name in all the world because she has never yielded to misfortunes, but has spent more lives and endured severer hardships in war than has any other. Wherefore also it is that she has the greatest power of any nation up to this day, and the memory of her glory will last forever. Even though we be compelled at last to abate somewhat of our greatness (for all things have their seasons of growth and of decay), yet will this recollection live, that of all Hellenes we governed the greatest number of Hellenic subjects; that we withstood our enemies, single or united, in the most terrible wars, and were inhabitants of a city endowed with every manner of wealth and magnificence. Hatred we have earned thereby, as have all who aspire to Empire. He judges well who accepts hatred in a great cause. Hatred lasts not long. Great deeds win immediate splendour, but their renown endures forever. So persist. Send no herald to the foe. For the greatest states and the greatest men, when troubles come, are least downcast in spirit and the most resolute in action."{145}

So with these words of Imperialism, proud and defiant, Pericles passes from us in the pages of Thucydides. Lincoln's are the nobler words,—after longer years of war than Athens had so far endured:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

We in these latter indolent and self-seeking days, remembering those who have so lately died for liberty, for England, for the Empire,—may we not still draw strength from the inspiration of these voices speaking down the centuries?

"L' Italia è Garibaldi"—Italy is Garibaldi—the hero saint, Ugo Bassi cried. "Athens, nominally a democracy, was in fact a Government by the First Citizen," declares Thucydides, in concise summary of the power and the glory of Pericles. Of no other Athenian statesman, throughout the city's many long years of freedom, can the same be said. Athens *was* Pericles. {146}

## CHAPTER III—THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WAR AT SEA

### *§ 1. Strategy: the tasks for Athens' fleet*

THE Athenian fleet was, as has been seen, immeasurably the superior to that of the enemy both in numbers and in efficiency. Pericles, however, had deprived his great navy of the greatest of its opportunities, the wielding of that "influence of sea power in giving a freedom of base"{147} to an army inferior in numbers. Still, however, there remained for it the primary and the more exclusive functions of a fleet, three in number.

Admiral Mahan has urged vigorously and is never tired of urging that the first business of a fleet is offence, and that this consists in the crushing of the rival fleet. "Sea ports should defend themselves; the sphere of the fleet is on the open sea, its object offence rather than defence, its objective the enemy's shipping wherever it can be found."{148}

The primary business of the Athenian fleet was to sweep the seas clear of all enemy warships. If these would not fight, as was probable, unless chance or blundering gave them a great advantage in numbers on any one occasion, they must be cooped up in their harbours during those months in the year when navigation was customary. Direct blockade was indeed impossible. A trireme could not "keep the sea" for many days without putting into land. "The essence of naval strategy", writes Julian Corbett, in his study of *Drake and the Tudor Navy,* "is sea endurance, *i.e.*, the degree of a fleet's capability of keeping the sea. In the period of oars we see mobility taking precedence of sea endurance." Just as coaling-stations have so long been vital to the modern navy, for all its greater "sea-endurance", so ports of call at short distances apart were indispensable to the ancient triremes, if despatched on distant expeditions. Similarly blockade from a distant base for any length of time was not attempted often. The "crowning mercy" of Sphacteria was a very special opportunity. The mere likelihood, however, of meeting an Athenian squadron sooner or later in the home waters of the Aegean should be enough to keep the enemy in their harbours like scared rabbits in their burrows. "Cutting out" methods, as employed by Drake at Cadiz, were beyond the enterprise even of Athenian sailors. But the minds of the Athenians could not be completely at ease so long as the enemy's fleet remained a "fleet in being". In 425 B.C., as will be seen, they secured the quiet possession of the greater part of the Peloponnesian warships by trickery which was as discreditable as it was effective. This was certainly one of Cleon's major triumphs. Thereafter, for a dozen years, no Peloponnesian fleet need be apprehended in the Aegean, and

the Athenian “thalassocracy” was absolutely beyond all risk of challenge. Enemy privateers preying upon their commerce were a possible nuisance and could not be entirely suppressed. The insurance rate against such war-risks, however, would have been quite negligible. And, as Mahan points out, a mere commerce-destroying policy unsupported by a powerful navy, however irritating to the other side, is of small practical advantage and can by no means counterbalance or make good the absence of real sea power. So the German submarine was a two-edged weapon, its sharper side perhaps reserved for those who employed it, and it rallied the United States to co-operation with those on whom it preyed. Always then, the Peloponnesian fleet should be chased and fought whenever and wherever it could be found. Unfortunately it tended to be as elusive as the Athenian army, and for precisely similar reasons.

A second and very particular object of the Athenian navy was to keep open the north-west-passage to Italy and Sicily. Here the difficulty of sea endurance became manifest. Corcyra was an invaluable port of call. But one or two friendly ports upon the western coast of Greece farther south were also most desirable. The chief Athenian base here was Naupactus, on the northern shore of and just inside the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf. This was a small settlement, twenty years old, of Messenians, fugitive from Spartan aggression and control of their own country, and hating their Peloponnesian oppressors with a deadly loathing. Athens had settled them originally at Naupactus. The roadstead gave good anchorage, and the place was defended by a wall on the landward side. Its defect was that it clung on the fringe of a hostile poverty-stricken and wild hinterland, and food supplies must always have been scanty if not precarious. This alone can serve as the apology for the small numbers of the Athenian ships stationed here at the outset of the war, while, but a few score miles away, the Peloponnesian naval arsenal of Cyllene in Elis housed at need a far larger squadron of the enemy in comfort. Corinthian ships, too, coasting along the southern shores of the Corinthian Gulf, could always easily reach Elis regardless of the enemy’s small post of observation at Naupactus, if they came in any strength. Whereas an Athenian navy bound for the Gulf had the long stormy voyage round Malea to brave, and must bring its supplies with it on shipboard. Had Pagae, the western port of Megara, been in Athenian hands the story would have been a very different one. Under the actual circumstances of Megarian hostility to Athens the Peloponnesians were in permanent possession of the gateway to the west when the great war began. The campaigns in the north-west, therefore, both by sea and land, were a very integral part of the strategy of the earlier years of the war, and not the isolated and irritatingly unimportant episodes which they sometimes are made to appear.

A third duty of the Athenian navy was to intercept seaborne commerce making for enemy ports. This, however, was a somewhat minor and incidental duty. Merchantmen made their way to the Peloponnese from Egypt, Libya, and the West, using Cythera in particular as a port of call.{149} Why the Athenians did not at once seize this island when war broke out remains a puzzle for this reason by itself, apart from any such broader strategical possibilities of offence against Laconia as have already been suggested. But it was not until 424 B.C. that Nicias captured Cythera and placed a garrison on the island. No stress, however, can be laid on the cutting off of merchant ships, since Athens' continental enemies could, it seems likely, subsist for any length of time quite happily on homegrown produce.

To serve these three strategical objects the Athenians possessed a quite adequate superiority of numbers if the Admiralty knew its business. To the advantage in numbers there was also added a far greater tactical ability than any likely to be shown by the enemy. In speed, in equipment, and in manœuvring, the Athenian trireme had the mastery of any hostile ship. The Peiraeus as a dockyard was unique. The poet Aristophanes gives a picture of its intense and vivid life when he imagines humorously the hurried mobilisation of a fleet to avenge a Spartan raid which carried off a puppy dog from Seriphos, smallest and most insignificant of islands of the Empire.

> "Ye would have launched three hundred ships of war,
> And all the City had at once been full
> Of shouting troops, of fuss with trierarchs,
> Of paying wages, gilding Pallases,
> Of rations measured, roaring colonnades,
> Of wineskins, oarloops, bargaining for casks,
> Of nets of onions, olives, garlic-heads,
> Of chaplets, pilchards, flutegirls, and black eyes.
> And all the Arsenal had rung with noise
> Of oar-spars planed, pegs hammered, oarloops fitted,
> Of bosuns' calls, and flutes, and trills, and whistles."{150}

Athens, like Venice later, was a city of sailormen, and as vitally, if less literally, built, rooted, established on the sea. A discriminating and cynical critic of the democracy, himself an Athenian, and a contemporary of Thucydides, shortly before 424 B.C. wrote a pamphlet concerning "The polity of the Athenians" which remains unrivalled for its contemptuous candour. At its very outset the unknown author says picturesquely that in such an ideal state for rogues and riffraff—

"It is only fair that the poorer classes and the People of Athens should be better off than the men of birth and wealth, seeing that it is the people who ply the oar and propel the galleys, and put round the City her girdle of power. The steersman, the boatswain, the naval officer, the look-out man at the prow, the shipwright—these are the folk who gird the city round with strength far more than do her hoplites and men of birth and quality.{151}

"The dainties", he writes elsewhere, "of Sicily and Italy, of Cyprus and Egypt and Lydia, of Pontus or the Peloponnese or wheresoever else it be, are all swept, as it were, into one centre, and all this is owing, as I say, to their maritime empire."{152}

"A race high-handed, strong of heart,
Sea-rovers, conquerors—"

it will be seen how well Athens maintained her "realm of the circling sea" in the great war.

### *§ 2. Tactics: the handling of the ships*

Before the Athenians in the early years of the great war invented a new art of naval tactics, battles by sea were, as Thucydides the Athenian scornfully says, "like land battles" Ship lay alongside ship, the deck of each heavily laden with archers, slingers, javelin-throwers, even heavy armed infantry, and unless these last also used their spears as missiles the gunwales of the two ships must have rubbed one against the other to bring the fighters on shipboard within reach. Presumably, in this event, the three oars which protruded through each of the trireme's port-holes must have been pulled back within the vessel, or, at least, have had only their blades projecting, if the curve of the ship's bulwarks was enough to protect them. This must have been done on both sides of the vessel simultaneously to avoid listing. In an ancient trireme the oarsman could not ship oars in any other way. The modern racing eight with locked rowlocks gives an idea of the difficulty. The sailors' part in the battle then was finished when the ships were brought alongside. Victory was won by "superiority of fire" from the troops and marines on board. Each trireme would embark some thirty to forty picked marines for the purpose. To carry a ship by boarding her seems to have been thought a risky experiment (or at least very little is heard of it), even though grapnels could be used for keeping the ships together. It can hardly have been the favourite method, as it was to the Elizabethan sailors and those of Nelson's day. Long ago, at the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., the crew of a Samothracian ship had performed a great boarding feat. Their own vessel had just been rammed and was sinking. They cleared the deck of the hostile ship by a furious hail of javelins, swarmed on board, and seized the craft for themselves. Probably there was plenty more boarding in the desperate *mêlée* of Salamis, but the records dwell only on this one unique example.{153} The ancient warship used sails as well as oars, but there was little elaborate manœuvring to get to

windward of the enemy on the day of battle. Phormio knew how to use a wind, and in this as in other respects he stands out “above the ruck”. Thus there was no running fight side by side, as at the close quarters of Nelson’s day, and as is still indeed the method, albeit at huge distances, of modern naval warfare. The art of ancient fighting at sea in the days immediately before the great war was certainly rudimentary.

The battle off Sybota Islands south of Corcyra in 432 B.C., the year before the outbreak of the war, fought between Corinthians and Corcyreans, is the last and best example of the old method of naval tactics before the Athenians showed a better way. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Thucydides dwells on its details with some minuteness. His amusement is more than half obvious. It is the first battle in his narrative which he describes at any length, and its contrast with the last of his battles, Cynossema, twenty-one years later, is striking. Death broke his history off at this point. But the later battles at sea of the “Ionian War”—wretchedly inferior though the tale of these remains—show, as is natural, that the trireme’s weapon is still mainly the ram and not the marine. This was the Athenian’s contribution to the science of naval tactics. If again, in the harbour of Syracuse, the old method reappears, as will presently be shown, this was due to the absence of “sea room”, which spelt disaster for Athens.

At Sybota Islands in 432 B.C. the Corinthians with 150 ships of war, their own and their allies’, under the admiral Xenocleides, met at daybreak 110 Corcyrean, equally resolved on battle. A small Athenian contingent of ten ships under Lacedaemonius, Cimon’s son, hovered in the near offing, but intervened vigorously only at the end of the battle to save their friends the Corcyreans from the worst consequences of their defeat. Never before, says Thucydides, had two Greek fleets so large met in battle. At the battle of Lade in 494 B.C. the Ionian fleet mustered 353 vessels. At Salamis, the Greek fleet numbered 380 and the Persian ships engaged in the battle may have been some 500. Certainly Sybota Islands battle is not on the grand scale in comparison. But Thucydides is not apt to remind his readers of the story of a war written by another, of whom he was indubitably, if unconsciously, jealous. And doubtless his comment on the numbers engaged at the battle of Sybota Islands is correct.

Then the two fleets clashed together and lay alongside in a dense mob of motionless ships. “There were no attempts to break the enemy’s line: brute force and rage made up for the want of tactics.” It was just a fight of missiles from the crowded decks “still in the old clumsy way”. So the desperate fight went on, until at last the Corinthians had the mastery and drove the Corcyreans in rout to take refuge in Corcyra harbour. There was a brief interlude while the

victors recovered their own wrecks and dead, and mercilessly slaughtered any of the enemy surviving on disabled ships. Any mercy to or rescue of the enemy is almost unknown in Greek warfare, which in this respect is cruel almost beyond belief. Then, as night was falling, the Corinthians reformed and moved against the harbour. The Corcyreans hurriedly mustered every ship still available to meet them. To their amazement they saw the victors suddenly backing water and rowing astern. Through the dusk came sailing a new Athenian squadron of 20 ships, picking its way through the debris of wrecks and floating bodies towards the harbour mouth. The Corinthians had seen them first and judged it best to sail away. They might be but the van of a greater squadron, they reflected. Thankfully the Corcyreans themselves returned to shore, where soon the newcomers, who had saved them by so timely an arrival, came themselves to anchor. Such was the battle of old-time method.[{154}]

In a year or two the Athenians changed the whole tactics of war at sea. For the javelin they substituted the ram, for the missile, as has been aptly said, the vessel itself.[{155}] This was the use they made of the superior skill of their sailors and the mobility of their triremes. The idea of ramming a hostile ship was not indeed new. Boys at play in canoes have the idea by instinct. When eight or nine hundred ships were cooped up in the narrow waters of Salamis, to ram was as inevitable as it was attractive. But it was the Athenian sailor in the great war who brought the art to perfection. Building his trireme, as he did, for speed, he paid a price for this object in bows which were not stout enough to ram the prow of an enemy's warship in direct charge. But the sides and the stern of a trireme were more vulnerable. It was therefore the object of his foe to present an unbroken long line of ship's beaks to any threat of an Athenian attack. At first it might seem enough to have the line long enough to outflank the approaching squadron. But the agile Athenian indulged in two manœuvres which sorely discomposed such simple defensive tactics. If the opposing line of warships were not accurately "dressed" at short distance from ship to ship (and rough water as well as wind had some say in this matter), the Athenians would break the line, rowing at top speed, and, turning in rear of the line, would then cheerfully ram stern after stern so presented to them. The ships in the line obviously had neither way nor room enough themselves to turn so quickly. Or, more simply, the attacking ships might approach in column, and, dividing as they neared the waiting line, use their greater speed to "row round "the enemy and so catch the outermost ships on the flank, the others on the stern. Once let the line break up in confusion, and Athenian daring and speed did the rest with the one or perhaps two rams (one above the other) with which every trireme was fitted.

These tactical manœuvres of “breaking” or “circling” the line, known as the “Diekplous” and “Periplous” respectively, harassed and bewildered the less expert Peloponnesians, until the geometrical genius of a Corinthian admiral devised a brilliant counterstroke, early in the war. A complete circle of ships, their prows all pointing outwards, and arranged with the vessels so near each to its neighbours that no enemy could possibly have room enough to row through, surely, he reflected, this formation would be invulnerable to any attack. Imagine a dog trying to get at a hedgehog rolled into a ball. Defensively this must be a perfect scheme. Offensively? But the Peloponnesian navy was not eager to fight offensive battles.

### *§ 3. Phormio*

The first use of “the circle” was made at the battle of Chalcis in 429 B.C. The result proved its merit—to the Athenians.[{156}] A Corinthian and allied squadron of 47 ships sailed westwards down the Corinthian Gulf conveying troops on board to reinforce a Spartan army which was engaged in land operations in Acarnania to the west of Aetolia. At Naupactus lay the Athenian admiral Phormio, with 20 ships only. Phormio, however badly outnumbered, was fully resolved to intercept the transport of these reinforcements to the enemy. The Corinthian admirals, Machaon and two colleagues, hoped for the best. Surely a sorry 20 ships would never dare stir out of their harbour against a fleet more than twice the number. It might, however, be wiser, they reflected, not to give the enemy even the chance. With one eye on Naupactus they crept westwards along the southern shore, got through the mouth of the gulf a bare mile away from the enemy coast without alarm, and brought their squadron safely into the harbour at Patrae to the south. Phormio for his part followed warily, coasting along the northern shore; slipped like the enemy through the narrows; and continued on a westerly course to the little port of Chalcis and the mouth of the river Evenus. “He preferred”, says Thucydides, “to make the attack outside the gulf.” Here he had that “sea-room” which was the instinctive desire of every Athenian admiral.




Nine miles of open sea now separated the two fleets, the one at Patrae, the other at Chalcis. The Corinthians saw that they had so far failed to elude the enemy's notice. But could they not make a dash across in the grey of the early morning before the Athenians saw them?

The 47 put out from Patrae before sunrise and steered north. When well clear of the land in mid-passage they saw the 20 bearing down upon them. It was time for prompt measures. Now, if ever, was the chance for "the circle". With so many troops on board it was clear that at any battle of missiles they must have a great advantage. Let them only escape ramming!

Machaon arranged 42 of the ships in a complete circle, prows outwards. Within the shelter of the circle he placed all his small craft and his five fastest warships. If the foolhardy Athenians did dare to attack the circle at any one point, it was in his mind that the five might be let slip through at some convenient point hard by, and, charging down gloriously upon the undefended sides of the enemy triremes, indulge in some ramming on their own account. All the 20—so he must have pictured the scene in his mind—would be so busy pricking with their prows against the point chosen for attack, that they would never notice the sudden sally of the five in time.

The sea was calm. There was no wind. The circle of the 42 waited in confidence the approach of the enemy.

The Athenians came up swiftly. At six or seven knots they would reach their prey “in mid-channel” within the hour. They were no sooner at a short distance from the motionless and defiant circle than, instead of hurling themselves upon it, they, in single line ahead, began rowing round the circle at a short distance from the prows of the enemy. Thereby they exposed their sides to the foe. But Machaon was not going to be tempted to break up his circle by ordering a charge. And the five could not get out in time for this. Lying motionless, they had no room to get way on for a charge.{157} Nor was it part of the plan.

Round and round the circle the menacing 20 rowed, as Joshua’s troops marched round the walls of waiting Jericho. Phormio’s orders were precise and precisely obeyed. His ships were not to attack until he gave the signal. Inevitably, as the van of the 20 approached each ship of the 42 so closely as well-nigh to graze its prow, the men at the oars of the threatened vessel tended gently to back water. Slowly but surely the circle contracted. The craft within the circle found themselves driven inwards and began to knock up one against the other.

Phormio had been at Naupactus ever since winter. He had learnt his wind and weather. Every morning at dawn an easterly breeze blew freshly out of the mouth of the gulf. The admiral waited for the coming of the wind.

Duly the wind sprang up and the sea became choppy. Ships, as Phormio had told his men, “do not have the steadiness of an army on land”. There was frantic confusion in the contracting circle, ship fending off colliding ship with long poles amid torrents of abuse and wild shouts, “so that nothing could be heard of any word of command or of the coxswains’ cries”. Rowing became impossible. The hampered oarsmen could not get their oars out of the choppy water, or they hit the crest of the waves as they swung forward. There were incessant “crabs”. Steering, therefore, became impossible as well. At the very height of the turmoil and the confusion Phormio gave the signal for attack. The 20, as one ship, turned and charged down upon the shattered circle. By good luck they sank first one of the enemy admirals’ ships, and proceeded to “make havoc” of the rest. The Corinthians made no attempt at a fight. Breaking asunder in wild disorder, they fled to Patrae, Dyme, and the friendly Achaean coast a few miles distant. The Athenians pursued, captured 12, crews and all, and sailed back in triumph to Naupactus. The Athenian admiral had manœuvred his small fleet as a whole with the greatest skill, using the superior mobility of each single vessel towards one common object.{158} Poseidon, a veritable Athenian god, had earned the enemy’s ship which the victors “dedicated” to him at the mouth of the gulf on their way back to port. The discomfited Peloponnesians fled south to

the dockyards of Cyllene, there to refit and receive a new, this time a Spartan, admiral, Cnemus, who with his own strong squadron presently reached the place from Leucas, after a discomfiture on land in Acarnania, the tale of which will presently be told.{159}

Phormio's second and most remarkable victory was won against desperate odds towards the end of the year 429 B.C. It is interesting as an example of the tactics used by a superior fleet in battle near the coast. The idea was to drive the enemy by weight of numbers on shore. The crews would leap overboard and escape (if the land was friendly). The empty hulls could then be towed off in triumph by the victors. The draught of an ancient trireme was not great; its keel was of oak; and, unless on a rocky shore, it was easy to salve the vessel so abandoned by its crew.

The news of the defeat off Chalcis put the Spartan Government at home "in a rage", says Thucydides. "The recent sea fight had been their first effort, and they were quite amazed and could not believe that their fleet was really so inferior to that of the enemy. They suspected there had been some cowardice, not reflecting that the Athenians were old experienced sailors and that they themselves were mere novices."{160} They sent three "advisers" off at once to their admiral Cnemus at Cyllene. "He was told that he must prepare to fight another battle, and a better one this time, and not let himself be kept off the sea by a handful of ships."{161} One of the advisers was the soldier Brasidas, the first Spartan in the whole war to receive public thanks for good service done, when in 431 B.C. he had saved the Laconian fortress Methone from capture by the Athenian fleet.{162} Now he was sent out to inspire Cnemus with some of his own vigour. Cnemus set to work to get more ships from his allies in the district. Phormio sent an urgent request home for reinforcements. The Admiralty thereupon sent out to him an additional 20 ships, but carefully instructed these to make a detour *en route* to Crete, there on that remote island to take part in the most miserable of petty squabbles, the issue of which was utterly unimportant, whatever befell. The imbecility of this order, when the whole Athenian position in the western seas is at stake and the Athenian admiral there is outnumbered by four to one, is almost beyond belief. It stands starkly out as the most glaring instance of crass strategical stupidity in the entire war. Pericles was then either just dead or near to death. The administration of the Admiralty must therefore have been in confusion, and it may well be that some civilian nincompoop seized his incomparable chance for blundering. Naupactus was the key to the whole of Athens' hopes in the west. Crete might have been Cloud-Cuckoo-Land for all that it mattered to the war. And the 20 ships, whose arrival would have raised Phormio's

squadron to one-half of the enemy's strength, are sent to him by way of Crete. Naturally they arrive too late. If out of the very jaws of disaster Phormio and his sailors pluck a second and a superb victory, the Athenian Admiralty has set an example of incompetence which may have been equalled in later years and other climes, but has surely rarely been surpassed.{163}

Cnemus, the Spartan, raised his own fleet at leisure to the imposing strength of 77 ships. Then he set to the task of annihilating the little handful of 20 war-scarred triremes which lay in Naupactus harbour. Leaving Cyllene, he coasted northwards to a mooring at Panormus in Achaea, a couple of miles inside the narrows opposite Naupactus six miles away across the gulf. The Peloponnesian army lined the coast behind the ships. Phormio for his part moved his faithful 20 ships out of Naupactus, and took up his position westwards of the promontory of Rhium at the entrance to the gulf. Thus he lay outside the narrows. If fight he must before reinforcements reached him, he would fight in the open sea. "If I can help," he explained to his sailors,

> "I shall not give battle in the gulf or sail into it. Our small fleet of experienced better sailors needs plenty of room for its tactics. Fleets cooped up in a narrow space fight a land, not a sea, battle, and under such circumstances numbers must tell. I will do all that I possibly can to secure ourselves the sea room we must have. It is your part to keep good watch and obey orders promptly, and, if it comes to fighting, above all to keep your battle order and *not talk.* Order and silence, these are wanted even more on sea than on land. You have thrashed these same enemy once, or the greater part of them. Men defeated once have so much the poorer spirit when they try again."{164}

They were brave and gallant words. But the tiny fleet had its own task of defending Naupactus, and it was so hampered thereby that it might be forced to conform to the enemy's movements. The admiral himself in his secret heart of hearts must have considered the disparity of numbers with feelings akin to despair. But his men should see him buoyant and cheerful as ever.

> "For I never turned my back upon Don or Devil yet."

Meanwhile Cnemus, seeing Phormio's movements, had himself moved his 77 ships westwards from Panormus to the southern promontory, also called Rhium, at the entrance to the gulf, and there outside the point he anchored, barely a mile distant from his foe. For a week the two fleets lay watching one the other, busily preparing for the fight. The Peloponnesians would not again be caught half unprepared for a battle at sea. Everything should be ready, down to the last man and rope. But time was running away. At any moment Athenian reinforcements might

arrive. Cnemus and Brasidas resolved to attack. Their own mariners were but gloomy, half-hearted, and dispirited seamen. The two leaders set to work to cheer them up with the sagest of sage reflections upon the indisputable advantages of courage and of their overwhelming superiority in numbers. “We will order the attack rather better than did your old commanders, and so give nobody the least excuse for cowardice,” they concluded hopefully.{165} And in fact their scheme was sound and promised well. Phormio *must* be enticed back into the gulf. They would leave him no choice. The Messenian garrison of Naupactus had moved out to line the shore behind his ships. The harbour town, therefore, was empty both of ships and men. By moving upon it, they would compel the Athenian admiral either to hasten again through the narrows to its succour or to lose the town, his only base in the whole district. This loss he could not possibly afford.

So it befell. Early in the morning they weighed anchor, and in a long column of four ships abreast{166} they stood out along their own coast making for the entrance to the gulf a short distance away, with their 20 best ships leading the column. Phormio, despite all his earlier assurances to his men, found himself obliged to conform to the enemy’s movements. The threat to undefended Naupactus was obvious. “Against his will and in great haste” he embarked his men, and his 20 ships in single line ahead coasted along the northern shore abreast of the enemy, hugging the land. The Messenians on the shore marched alongside, making for home. Both fleets began to round the promontories into the gulf. Everything for the Spartans went according to plan. Their tactics were entirely admirable.{167}

Just when the fleets were nearest, before the coast lines fell away to north and east, Cnemus gave his signal. At once his ships bore round, from “column of fours into line four deep” (in military language),{168} making their right-angled left turn, and swooped at full speed down over the 1500 yards of water which lay between, charging upon the exposed sides of the Athenian vessels. The rearmost of the Athenian line, nine in number, were trapped. They were driven up hard on shore. The crew of one stuck by their ship and were taken to a man. Most of the rest jumped overboard and swam to shore. (All Athenians learnt to swim as boys—to their vast advantage.) Those who did not jump were slain. The victors fastened ropes to the empty hulls and began to tow them off. But the Messenian troops, hitherto helpless spectators of the disaster, pluckily dashing into the waves armed as they were, waded out and clambered where they could aboard. Fighting from the decks, they hurled the enemy back and recovered a few of the eight ships as they were already being towed off shore. The remainder were beyond their

reach.

Meanwhile the van of the Athenian line, the other ii, had escaped for the moment. The 20 “fastest” Peloponnesian ships on the right wing of the charging line were not, for all that, quite fast enough. Of the 11, 10, rowing furiously, reached Naupactus harbour and there had time to form up into line, prows to seaward, prepared to defend themselves to the last. But the eleventh, the “Old Superb” surely of the Athenian navy, came lagging behind. Hard upon its heels, strung out in disorder, just as each vessel’s speed allowed, came the exultant pursuers, “singing a paean of victory as they rowed”, a ship of Leucas, on which was Timocrates, one of Cnemus’ three Spartan advisers, leading the pursuit, directly in the wake of the laggard.

Off Naupactus’ harbour mouth there lay at anchor a solitary merchantman. The fugitive ship seized the chance. Why does not Thucydides preserve the name of her commander? Rowing at top speed right round the merchant ship, she came upon the Leucadian as this swerved aside to clear the moored vessel, struck her amidships, and incontinently sank her. As she sank, Timocrates slew himself, and his body was washed into Naupactus harbour.

At this quite unexpected sight, fear fell upon the long straggling Peloponnesian line of pursuing vessels. Some easied, meaning to wait for the rest, their blades flat on the water, “a silly thing to do with the enemy so near”. Others getting into shoal water ran aground. The crews of the surviving Athenian ships took heart again. Phormio gave the signal. They bore shouting down upon the enemy, now dotted over the sea in every possible position. These, now in hopeless disorder and panic, after a brief resistance, fled for Panormus, one and all. The Athenians took six and recovered besides their own captured vessels which the Messenians had failed to save. Under cover of night the whole of the enemy’s fleet dispersed, the Leucadians to their island, the rest stealing up the gulf shamefacedly home to Corinth. Brasidas’ remarks have not been preserved.

Soon after the dispersal of the conquered enemy, the 20 ships from Crete, “which”, says Thucydides succinctly, “ought to have reached Phormio before the battle”, arrived tardily at Naupactus. Contrary winds and bad sailing weather had helped to delay their coming. Without their aid Phormio had remained master of the western sea.[{169}]

When winter drew near, he himself took the offensive. He coasted up north, disembarked with a small force near Astacus, and marched inland by Coronta to Stratus. At these and other places he “removed suspects”. Then he returned to his ships and sailed away again to

Naupactus.{170} With the coming of spring he returned victoriously to Athens, bringing his captured enemy ships and prisoners with him. Some centuries later, a wandering. Greek archaeologist saw, in Apollo's sacred precincts at Delphi, Phormio's trophies of victory by land and sea, bronze shields and the figure-heads of ships, dedicated there by Athens with an inscription in honour of her admiral.{171}

After his return to his city in the spring of 428 B.C. he appears no more in the pages of Thucydides. Death must have come suddenly upon him, for a few months later the Acarnanians sent begging the Athenians to send his son Asopius to help them. They would never have asked for the son had the father, their hero, been alive. Some measure of the admiral's genius, they fondly hoped, might have been inherited by his son. Four years later, Aristophanes lays his wreath of *immortelles* upon his hero's grave.{172} So Phormio died, "a grey-haired warrior with the fire and heart of a boy". He was buried in the great State cemetery at Pericles' side. Three-quarters of a century later they laid beside the two another admiral, Chabrias, who, when his ship was rammed by the enemy at Chios in 357 B.C., chose to sink with her rather than follow his crew's example and save his life by swimming.{173}

Phormio had served his country faithfully and well. He is in the line of great Athenian admirals from Themistocles and Cimon to Conon and Chabrias, though it never was his good fortune to meet the whole of the enemy's main battle fleet at sea. As a boy he may have cheered Themistocles in Athens' streets. Cimon may have been the young soldier's hero and example. He did service in his manhood at the siege of Samos as Pericles' colleague in 439,{174} and nine years later at the investment of Potidaea.{175} Men talked of him proudly in the years following his death, of his love of discipline, his sharing of the common sailor's hardships. "Ah, when Peace really comes," says the old Athenian rustic in Aristophanes' comedy the *Peace*,

> "Then will be the time for laughing,
> Shouting out in jovial glee,
> Sailing, sleeping, feasting, quaffing,
> All the public sights to see;
> Then the Cottabus be playing,
> Then the hip—hip—hip—hurraying,
> Pass the day and pass the night
> Like a regular Sybarite."

Thereupon the chorus of farmers chimes in:

> "Oh that it were yet my fortune those delightful days to see!

Woes enough I've had to bear,
Sorry pallets, trouble, care,
Such as fell to Phormio's share;
I would never more thereafter so morose and bitter be."{176}

One special trouble Phormio had to bear. After one of his expeditions, probably that to Potidaea, upon presenting his accounts of payments made, the public auditors were dissatisfied and he was fined a hundred minae. He was a poor man and unable to pay the fine. Disfranchised in consequence, he went to live quietly on his small country farm. While he was there, his citizens elected him again as general. He was sorely needed for the western command.

"But", so runs the account, "he said he would not go to sea, since he owed money, and could not look his men in the face until he had paid his debt."

The people thereupon arranged for the payment of the fine: "for they were determined that he should have the command".{177}

So he sailed westward ho! once more, loving and beloved of Poseidon the god of the sea. Let the poet Aristophanes again, in his glorious song of the Knights to their patron god, close Phormio's story:

"Dread Poseidon, the Horseman's King,
Thou who lovest the brazen clash,
Clash and neighing of warlike steeds;
Pleased to watch where the trireme speeds,
Purple-beaked, to the oar's long swing,
Winning glory (and pay); but chief
Where bright youths in their chariots flash
Racing (coming perchance to grief)
Cronus's son,
Throned on Geraestus and Sunium bold,
Swaying thy dolphins with trident of gold,
Come, O come, at the call of us;
Dearest to Phormio thou,
Yea and dearest to all of us,
Dearest to all of us now."
Let us praise our mighty fathers, men who ne'er would quake or quail,
Worthy of their native country, worthy of Athena's veil;
Men who with our fleets and armies everywhere the victory won,
And adorned our ancient city by achievements nobly done.
Never stayed they then to reckon what the numbers of the foe,

At the instant that they saw them, all their thought was
*At him go!*"[{178}]

So they laid Phormio by Pericles' side in his last sleep, and lesser men took up the burden of battle as of state-craft.

"And all we hear is a whisper sound of music
Of brass horns dustily raised and briefly blown,
And a cry of grief, and men in a stiff procession
Marching away and softly gone."[{179}]

## *§ 4. Alcidas*

The name Spartan always calls up to mind the picture of a soldier, stupid perhaps, but of desperate and dogged courage. The Spartan boy with his barrack life, his single garment at every season of the year, his cruel floggings, his daily swim in the icy waters of the Eurotas, his exercises, games, drillings, wrestlings, all naked, his thievings, wherein any torment borne is better than discovery, his Helot-hunting, becomes the Spartan warrior, returning with his shield or on it, unconquerable, save by the passion of patriotism which consumes him from childhood to the day of death. The Spartan girl, sharing her brother's games and sports, becomes the wife or mother who laments only over those who come alive and defeated from the battlefield. Such was the legacy bequeathed by Leonidas to his people. Such a man, save for the stupidity, was Brasidas, Spartan hero of the great war. The Spartan Alcidas must be the exception to prove the noble rule a truth and not a legend. So unfriendly an element to Sparta was the sea.

In the summer of 428 B.C. Mitylene, the chief city of Lesbos, revolted against Athens.[{180}] The angry Athenians bestirred themselves with vigour, and by the winter of the year the rebels were straitly blockaded both by sea and by land. Sparta must redeem her promise to them of help if the town was not to fall. An envoy, one Salaethus, made his way into the town, and promised the sending of a Peloponnesian fleet presently to its succour. Encouraged by this, the townsfolk held out stoutly while winter passed into spring and spring to summer.[{181}]

Then at last the Peloponnesian army invaded Attica, and as many as 42 ships were despatched simultaneously for Lesbos.[{182}] It was hoped at Sparta that the Athenians could have their attention so distracted at home that the naval expeditionary force could slip over to Mitylene unobserved. It had even been planned to haul ships over the Isthmus of Corinth from

the Corinthian to the Saronic Gulf and attack Athens by sea as well as by land, and carpenters were set to work to fashion the machines for haulage. This latter part of the heroic programme miscarried. An Athenian squadron of 100 ships made its appearance off the Isthmus coasts, and landing parties spread consternation far and wide. An earlier squadron of 30 ships under Phormio's son Asopius had already passed by, ravaging the Laconian coast on its voyage to the west. Another Athenian fleet, 100 strong, was cruising off Attica, Salamis, and Euboea. Athens' maritime strength seemed indeed prodigious and invincible in this year 427 B.C. Thucydides expressly comments in admiration upon the total number of her ships—250 "all effective and in good trim"—then in active commission. Obviously the Saronic Gulf was most unsafe for Peloponnesians, and their vessels remained at Corinth, out of reach. The haulage-machines were useless, and the carpenters, like the sailors, could rest on their oars.{183}

But the promise to Mitylene must in all honour be redeemed, and the 42 ships did sail when the army under Cleomenes marched into Attica. Their admiral was Alcidas. They slipped away out of sight of the Laconian coast. Would they arrive at starving Mitylene in time?

Day after day passed. The army in Attica ravaged the land far and wide remorselessly. No news came from overseas. Their food was spent. They marched off home again and dispersed, each contingent to its own city.

Day after day passed. In vain the besieged at Mitylene gazed seawards, looking for the sails of the promised squadron. Mitylene capitulated, and the Athenian general Paches marched into the town.{184} "The Peloponnesians will be kept off the sea," Pericles had assured his citizens before the war began.{185} Alcidas had failed convincingly to disprove the great assurance.

Yet he and his gallant squadron were none the less at sea. This Spartan, however, was not the man to thrust his head hurriedly into the lion's jaws. "The Peloponnesians in the ships," Thucydides remarks, "who ought to have come with speed to Mitylene, wasted time about the Peloponnese itself and proceeded in leisurely fashion for the rest of the voyage."{186} Alcidas sailed by way of Delos to Myconus, where first he heard a rumour of the fall of Mitylene. On proceeding to the mainland Ionian coast near Erythrae he had the sorry news confirmed. The town he should have saved had surrendered just a week ago. In vain a man of Elis urged him to make a dash for the place and recapture it by surprise. In vain others urged him to garrison some town upon the coast of Asia Minor to serve as rallying-point for a revolt in the district against Athens and her control of it. "His one and only idea was to get back home as fast as he could."{187} He crept cautiously along the coast to Ephesus, capturing many prisoners on the

way. They had been easily taken,

> "because, when the countryfolk saw the ships, instead of running, they swarmed down to them, thinking them Athenian. They had not the remotest expectation that while the Athenians were masters of the sea Peloponnesian ships would find their way to Ionia."{188}

No sentence in Thucydides is more significant of Athens' superiority at sea. It had not been thought worthwhile even to fortify the cities on the coast.

But at Clarus, near Ephesus, the heart of Alcidas failed him finally. For there he found himself sighted by two Athenian vessels, the triremes *Salaminia* and *Paralus*, which bore up straightway to carry the news to Paches in Mitylene, 125 miles away. Like the scared merchantmen fleeing into the West Indies' ports at a mere glimpse of Captain Kidd's topsails, Alcidas promptly fled for home, with Paches hot at his heels in the ardour of the chase. The coward Spartan had too long a start. At Patmos the Athenian broke off the pursuit. Alcidas and his grateful squadron reached home safely.{189} A gale which buffeted the fugitives sorely off Crete and drove them into Cyllene harbour in scattered fragments{190} was a kindlier foe than the angry vengeance of the Athenians for the insult offered their sea power.

Such pronounced good fortune showed Alcidas to be a man of luck and mettle. Later in the year Sparta sent him out again to take command by sea. Corcyra in this same year 427 B.C. was in a state of wild and bloody faction fighting. In aid of Athens' interests on the island a small Athenian squadron of 12 ships under one Nicostratus, later a man of some small note, had sailed there from Naupactus. Alcidas was therefore ordered to the scene. He now had as many as 53 ships, with the indefatigable Brasidas as well to help him. So in due course, arriving at Corcyra, he found himself outnumbered by a fleet of 60 Corcyrean and the 12 Athenian vessels. With quite significant skill he divided his fleet for the inevitable battle. Two of the Corcyrean 60 had promptly deserted to his side. Twenty of his own 53, with these two added, he thought amply sufficient to engage the 58 Corcyrean, on whose decks the crews were already fighting among themselves before they closed with the enemy. The greater part of his fleet, 33 in number, were not too many to concentrate against the dozen ships of Athens. So the fight was joined.

It was a noteworthy battle, for it saw the second and the last recorded use of the famous defensive tactical use of the "circle". The Corcyreans gave their opponents little trouble. But the dozen Athenians were as aggressively unpleasant as usual, heavy odds against them

notwithstanding. Phormio's drum was still beating in their ears. They attacked the 33 and promptly sent one of these to the bottom by ramming her. The surviving 32 in great consternation formed themselves into the "circle" again with an ease which betokens much preliminary practice of this difficult movement.[{191}] Once again, the Athenians began to row round the circle, following Phormio's model tactics. But at this point the rest of Alcidas' fleet left the Corcyreans to their own confused devices and came up in hot haste to the rescue, "fearing a repetition of what had happened at Naupactus". The Athenians therefore backed away in leisurely defiance, to give their routed allies time to make good their escape, and the battle ended inconclusively as the summer sun went down upon the scene. The "circle" was saved. But the geometrical device was scarcely a success, and there is no evidence that it was ever employed again. The Peloponnesians retired to their station on the mainland opposite Corcyra, proudly towing off with them 13 Corcyrean ships which they had taken.

The next morning dawned. The Corcyreans were utterly demoralised, and manned with difficulty 30 of their remaining ships. Brasidas implored his colleague, to whom he was subordinate, to push a second attack home. Alcidas refused. He had had his glut of enterprise by sea. The 12 Athenian ships were still there somewhere lurking malignly in the recesses of Corcyra's harbour. The Spartan spent the earlier morning hours in landing a parcel of troops to plunder a bit of the island coast, until the usual mid-day siesta called them away for grateful rest. Obviously nothing more could be done that afternoon. Night was falling when signals were seen flashing from Leucas, 50 miles away. The alarmed Alcidas was informed by these (and it is a striking example of the efficiency of a valuable branch of military art of whose practice by the Greeks we are told so little) that a strong Athenian squadron of 60 sail was on its way north to Corcyra. At skilful and timely flight Alcidas was unsurpassed. The coming fleet under Eurymedon was, as usual, sailing round the outer coast of Leucas. There was just one way of escape. At that time Leucas was no longer strictly an island, a narrow spit of "Lido" sand linking it with the mainland. From time to time a channel has been cut through the stuff which the north-west gales are always heaping up to block the passage. It has been a constant struggle of man with nature to keep the way open, in which the English masters of the island last century took a prominent part. But in Alcidas' day the sand temporarily had the mastery. It gave the Spartan a means of escape unsuspected by the approaching enemy. Hugging the coast and laboriously dragging his ships one by one over the spit of sand, Alcidas eluded the foe. Corcyra was left to the tender mercy of the democrats. But the Spartan could plume himself once again on reaching safety.[{192}] Thereafter Alcidas vanishes from naval history. He

makes one last sorry appearance on land at the founding of the unlucky Spartan colony of Heraclea, near Thermopylae.{193} His naval services are ended. He has demonstrated quite successfully the prestige and superiority of the Athenian navy. Not in such manner are naval triumphs won, neither by furtive raids on a Hartlepool or Whitby, nor by hurried flight to the shelter of a Kiel canal. An Alcidas was needed to reinforce the moral of a Phormio's victories.

### *§ 5. The Athenian naval predominance*

The history of the war at sea down to the time when Athens lost the best part both of her ships and of her sailors at Syracuse in 413 B.C. shows that the Peloponnesians disliked and had good reason to dislike naval engagements.

It was their desire to lurk in harbour unless or until the absence of an Athenian fleet in the neighbourhood gave them the chance of voyaging on their own account. Athens' command of the sea was never more indisputable than in the years following the success of Sphacteria in 425 B.C., when, as will be told later, the Peloponnesians were robbed of their war navy at a single stroke. It was this invincible predominance which enabled her to despatch her armada to Syracuse in 415 B.C. and still retain at home for the time being ships more than enough to crush any attempt at challenge by the foe. It was only the sending of the second great squadron two years later under Demosthenes which drained her naval force so dangerously that, when never a single ship of either fleet came home again, she seemed to be doomed to immediate destruction. In this she disappointed her exultant enemies' confident expectation. With her numbers reduced to an equality with those of her foes, and with every other disadvantage born of faction and of poverty, still Athens held out for ten long years,{194} and her last remaining fleet won victory after victory. In a fair fight on open water Athens' main fleet was never defeated throughout the whole course of the great war.

By itself the Athenian navy could not "win the war", a fact rightly stressed by a British admiral writing with the lessons of our own Great War freshly in his thoughts.{195} Naval predominance was not enough, unless the great rival land Power wearied first of the struggle. But her navy could and did save Athens from decisive defeat until incompetence or treachery finally destroyed it. And it won for her the undying glory of victory after victory. The tale of the Athenian fleet at Pylos, at Syracuse, at Cynossema, Cyzicus, Arginusae, will be told in due course. Perhaps these its last three victories, when numbers were more or less equal and, in one battle at least, the Athenian ships were old and sluggish, earn for the common sailor a

greater glory even than that won by him earlier. Tactics decline in interest. Old-fashioned methods reappear. Despite all and through all, the Athenian navy is invincible, given only that sea-room which Phormio longed for and every sailor loves.

> "But sea-room, an the brine and cloudy billow
> Kiss the moon, I care not,"

says Shakespeare's mariner in *Pericles*. Put the enemy in place of the storm, and there is no Athenian sailor but would make the same proud boast.

"Let the foe lay hands on all the treasures of Olympia and Delphi," cried Pericles before the war began. "Let them seek to tempt hirelings on our ships to desert for better pay. Should this befall, ourselves, citizens and metics, by ourselves will man the ships without them. By ourselves we are a match for the enemy. Today our helmsmen all are citizens, and our sailors more in numbers and better than those of the whole of the rest of Hellas."{196}

The gods of Olympia and of Delphi grudged their gold to Sparta. The priests of Zeus and of Apollo were wary financiers. For many years this special peril to Athens' naval predominance was averted. Then, near the great war's close, Persia gave her gold to the enemy's admirals. And Athens' sailors were more in number no longer. Her dead mariners lay strewn too thickly beneath the sombre waters of Syracuse Great Harbour. Yet it was not the Athenian sailor-man who lost for his city the Empire of the Seas.

> "While man shall take his life to stake
> At risk of shoal or main..."

Let the English above all praise the mariners of Athens. "Hands off the fleet", yes, and tongues as well. The "comic poets" of Athens had licence from their laughter-loving folk to rail at every Athenian individual, class, or institution. Statesmen, orators, and generals, philosophers, poets, and women, lawcourts, assemblies, and Commissions, all come under the lash and sting of Aristophanes and his fellow-playwrights. But the fleet was sacred. Once and once only does the greatest of these dramatists allow himself a passing jibe at the sailor who is forgetting to be the sailor of old time, when the pest of talk is infecting even the discipline of the navy. Aristophanes' chosen poet Aeschylus, himself one of the heroes of Salamis, breaks out fiercely upon the evil of the later time:

> "Moreover to prate, to harangue, to debate, is now the ambition

of all in the State.
Each exercise-ground is in consequence found deserted and empty; to evil repute
Your lessons have brought our youngsters and taught our sailors to challenge, discuss, and refute
The orders they get from their captains; and yet, when *I* was alive, I protest that the knaves
Knew nothing at all save for rations to call, and to sing
'Rhyppapai' as they pulled through the waves."[{197}]

The sailors in his audience, at that moment, six months after the last great naval victory of Arginusae, could afford to chuckle at this hit at the lower deck. For the rest, even the poet, critic of the democracy though he may have been, spared the fleet, the chief bulwark of that democracy, his onslaughts. For Aristophanes was still a patriot and an Athenian.

## CHAPTER IV—THE CAMPAIGNS IN THE NORTH-WEST

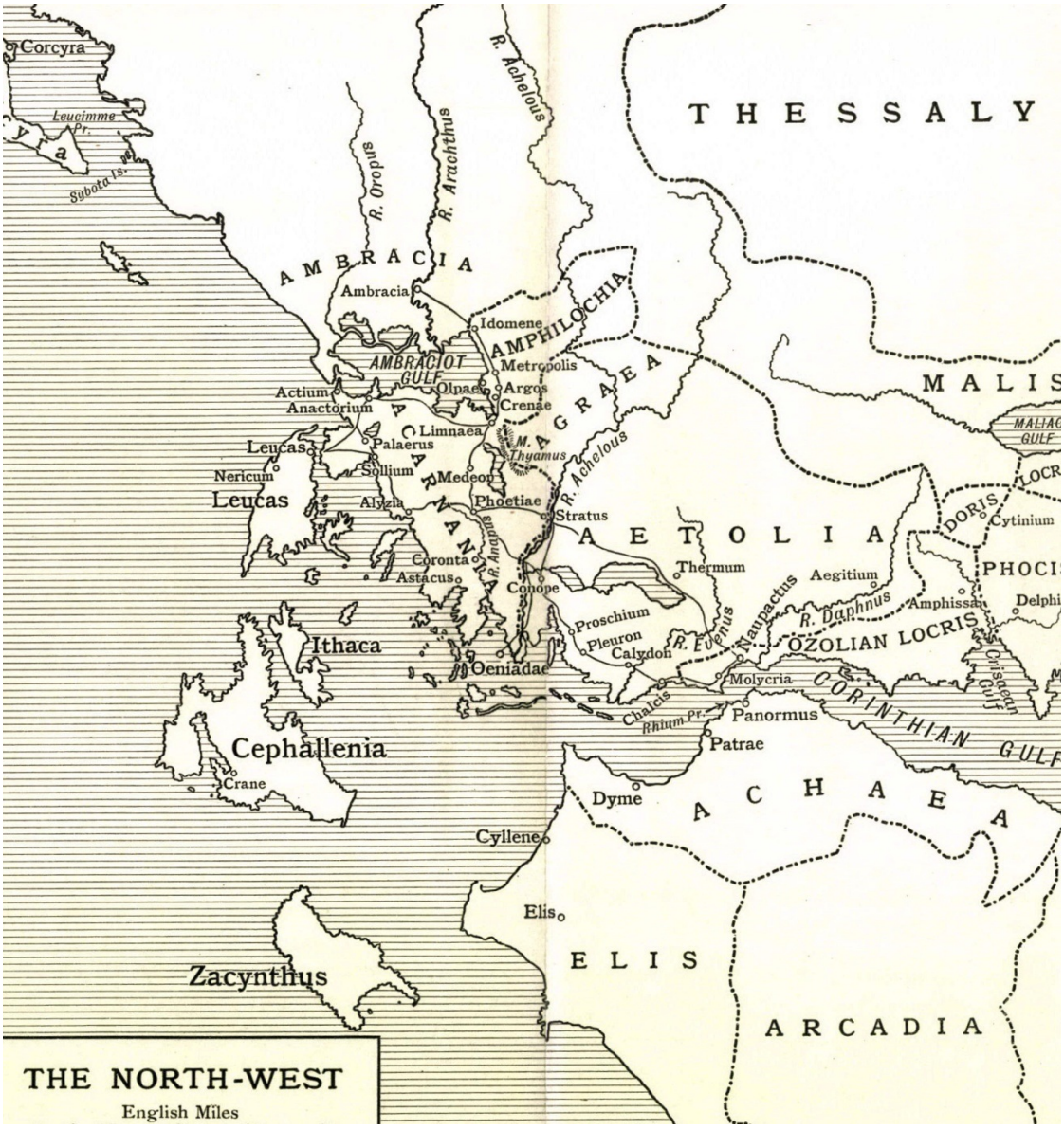
### *§ 1. The theatre of war*

THE “North-West” of Greece, the district from the island Zacynthus on the south to Corcyra on the north, was of importance to Athens because its islands, coast towns, and peoples commanded the route which her ships, merchantmen, and war vessels must take on the voyage to and from Italy and Sicily. Until it came to war (when the islanders’ ships were worth the having), the district was not valuable to her for any other reason, either political or commercial, except in so far as it was always a pleasure to annoy Corinth by interference in its affairs. For the district was full of Corinthian colonies.

For years past, the North-West had been the scene of fierce feuds and hatreds. City raged against city, tribe against tribe. The natives of the coast and the hinterland behind it were hardly more civilised than they are today, when competing religions have added their fuel to the flames. It needed Rome to give the district prosperity and peace. All its inhabitants, Greek and barbarian, in 431 B.C., were united in just one very reasonable determination, namely to use the great war for their own ends, to get by it the better of their own local enemies. Otherwise, what did it matter to any of them which of these two distant, powerful, and quarrelsome cities, Athens and Sparta, came out on top? Even Corinth’s interests could kindle but a gentle enthusiasm in her own colonies, and not in all of these. Sparta, indeed, might be more likely to leave the North-West to its own happy devices than were the Athenian busybodies with their ever-restless fleet. And Sparta was proclaiming loudly that she was fighting for the “liberty” of all the Greeks. A noble war-cry! Who would guarantee that Sparta herself would leave them alone if she did manage to win the victory? Meanwhile, however, there were rich chestnuts to be picked out of the blazing fire.

There were two feuds in chief, the one on sea, the other on land. Corcyra had hated Corinth for two and a half centuries. On land there was a feud as bitter. The chief military power of the district (to use grandiose language) was that of the Ambraciots on the north, whose chief city was Ambracia, a Corinthian colony, a town of some 7000 citizens.[{198}] Their neighbours, the Amphilochians to the east of the Ambraciot Gulf and the Acarnanians to the south of it, had fallen at loggerheads with them concerning the chief town of the district, Amphilochian Argos, near the head of the gulf. Amphilochians first dwelt in this town. Later, there came Ambraciot settlers and lived with them side by side. The original townsfolk learnt Greek ways and speech

from them. Their Amphilochian kinsfolk remained barbarians. Presently the new-comers drove the old inhabitants out. These sought aid from the friendly Acarnanians. Appeal was made to Athens. Sometime shortly before the great war, Phormio and 30 ships sailed into the gulf and promptly took the city. The Amphilochians were restored. Their allies the Acarnanians supplied other citizens. The Ambraciots remained in the town—as slaves.[{199}] Ambracia was minded to revenge her countrymen upon Argos, Acarnania, and Athens at the earliest possible opportunity. And the wild rustic Agraeans to the south-east of Argos, under a tribal king Salynthius, were quite ready to help the best soldiers of the district, the Ambraciots,[{200}] in any enterprise for fighting and for plunder.[{201}]




The islands were divided in their sympathies. Zacynthus took the Athenian side, like Corcyra.[{202}] The midway islands, Cephallenia and Leucas, were mildly attached to Corinth

and gave her help of varying value.[{203}] On Leucas there was a small Corinthian garrison.[{204}] The towns of the coast-line, mostly Corinthian colonies, were zealous for the Peloponnesian cause. First of these was Oeniadae, a famous city on a low hill in the marshes at the mouth of the great river of the district, the Achelous. The turbulent, muddy river made the city well-nigh impregnable to attack, at least in winter from the landward side.[{205}] In the legendary days there had come wandering a Greek, Alcmaeon, to whom the whole earth was accursed after his murder of his mother. “Find you a land on which the sun did not shine when the deed was done—then, but not till then, comes escape from your terrors.” So Apollo the sun-god had by his oracle commanded. The foaming Achelous, eddying and twisting in its channel, laid bare a mud-bank. Here the fugitive found his rest and built him a city to dwell in. So he ruled the tribesmen, and left to the country the name of his son, Acarnan. So Oeniadae became a chief city of Acarnania.[{206}] Here in these same marshes a hundred years ago the Englishman, Byron, defied the conquering Turk, and, falling victim to the pestilence of the swamps, redeemed his own name to undying honour and gave Misolonghi its proud place in the history of Greek liberty.

Oeniadae then stood stoutly for the Spartan side, though her Acarnanian kin were allies of the enemy. North of it, on the coast, lay Astacus, governed by “the tyrant” Evarchus, as poor a little pawn in the great game as ever any petty Italian “despot” who fell into the clutches of Caesar Borgia. Evarchus, misliking democracy, supported Corinth.[{207}] North again of Astacus lay Sollium, a colony of Corinth, somewhat apprehensive, too, of the native Acarnanian township of Palaerus a few miles away.[{208}] And on the southern shore and just inside of the narrow entrance into the broad Ambraciot Gulf round Actium promontory was a stronger city, Anactorium by name, a joint Corinthian and Corcyrean colony. The Corinthians in 432 B.C. had treacherously seized and garrisoned this town, which the Acarnanians would gladly have had for their own, and looked all the more angrily for this upon the Corinthian cause.[{209}] Just four centuries later, Actium won its immortal fame when Cleopatra fled and Mark Antony, following his beloved, gave the lordship of the world to Octavian, greatest of the Romans.

The greater part of the North-West was thus hostile to Athens at the beginning of the great war. To the south, at Naupactus within the Corinthian Gulf, and at Corcyra, far away in the north, her ships could find shelter. At the head of the Ambraciot Gulf, the little hill fort of Olpae guarded the access of the men of Argos, three miles away inland, to the sea. This, too, would welcome an Athenian vessel if it ventured past enemy Anactorium at the entrance.[{210}]

The country-side too behind the coast towns, and the native villages on the coast itself, were friendly. But the hostile towns guarded much of the coast itself and made it dangerous voyaging for the Athenians in time of war. The chief town of Acarnania was Stratus, the modern Surovigli, in the Achelous valley on the river's western bank. This was the centre of the inland district, with roads radiating from it in all directions. It indeed was friendly.{211} But it was dangerously exposed to attack by the Ambraciots, and was cause of anxiety rather than of strength to the Athenian commander at Naupactus.

### *§ 2. The battle of Stratus*

In the very first year of the war, an Athenian fleet of 100 ships, under three admirals, men of no note, appeared in the district, after doing some damage to Laconia and Elis coasts *en route*. Joined by 50 Corcyreans they fared as far as Sollium, which they took and handed over to the Acarnanians of Palaerus to garrison. Voyaging back again, they stormed Astacus, expelling its unlucky tyrant, and won over Cephallenia Island with its four towns peaceably to the Athenian side. Then home they went.{212}

Evarchus made his way disconsolately to Corinth, where he wrought upon the feelings of the Corinthians so successfully that, when the enemy were safely off the scene again, these put valorously out to sea with 40 ships and three commanders. (It was not until the next winter of 430 B.C. that Phormio arrived at Naupactus.) The tyrant contributed a band of mercenaries to the expedition at his own charges. So they brought Evarchus back in triumph to Astacus. He resumed his reign and disappears from any further record. Native villages on the Acarnanian coast, however, refused to listen to Corinthian persuasions, and the men of Crane on Cephallenia entrapped a landing-party. So the Corinthians too went home, not without serious loss of life.{213}

In the following year, 430 B.C., the Athenians, exhausted by their previous achievements, made no attempt to follow up their successes. The Peloponnesians had the field clear. They made a considerable effort. As many as 100 ships descended upon Zacynthus under the Spartan admiral Cnemus, who now makes his first appearance in the western area, where in a few years he managed to lose any reputation for ability which he may once have enjoyed at Sparta. On this occasion he plundered the lands of the men of Zacynthus, and went back home again. In the north the men of Ambracia took the field, assisted by a horde of gleeful barbarians. They marched upon the hated city of Amphilochian Argos. It defied their assaults. They ravaged its

fields outside and went back home again. The tribes dispersed.{214}

But the foray had whetted the Ambraciots' appetite. They proposed a comprehensive plan to the Spartan Government. Give them all due aid, they pleaded, and they would crush Acarnania, take Cephallenia and Zacynthus, and might hope to finish up gloriously by the capture even of Naupactus itself. There would then be an end of these Athenian circumnavigations of the Peloponnese.{215}

The Spartan Government was greatly attracted by the scheme. Corinth was enthusiastic. Every possible ally was called upon for ships, and Cnemus, selected as generalissimo, was sent with a whole thousand Peloponnesian hoplites to act as core of the motley muster of Highland clans. Leucas was the rendezvous. Cnemus successfully slipped across to the island with the thousand, unobserved by Phormio at Naupactus. He found the ships from Leucas, Anactorium, and Ambracia duly arrived. But the Corinthian contingent delayed its coming. The Spartan had now at his disposal without it several thousands of Greek and native troops. The whole strength of the district was collected together. Thucydides calls the barbarian roll with great magnificence: "Chaonians under Photius and Nicanor, presidents; Thesprotians, who also own no king; Paravaeans under King Oroedus; Orestians with them, sent to help by King Antiochus; a Molossian and Atintanian corps under command of Sabylinthus, guardian of Tharypas the king, who was still a minor"—in such precise detail does the historian give us his heroic "catalogue" for the siege of the enemy's capital Stratus.{216} Perdiccas, too, the trickster, king of distant Macedonia, ally of Athens at the moment, sent a thousand troops. These arrived too late, remarks Thucydides drily. There was the strong Ambraciot levy as well.

Cnemus could not wait indefinitely for the 47 ships from Corinth. He really had too many mouths to feed. At the head of his host he crossed the sand from Leucas to the mainland,{217} and marched in panoply of war upon the scared and isolated Acarnanians. In vain these sent to Phormio at Naupactus for aid. He replied that his business was urgent elsewhere. There was the fleet mustering at Corinth to which he must attend. How skilfully he and his little squadron of 20 did attend to them, at the battle of Chalcis, has been told already.{218} That he had failed earlier to catch Cnemus and the thousand might seem a pity. As things turned out, this was no loss.

Cnemus led his host gaily forwards along the southern shore of the Ambraciot Gulf. They plundered the small unwalled village at Limnaea, crossed the northern spur of Mount Thyamus,

and came down from the north upon the town of Stratus. The Acarnanians of the countryside left their chief city to guard itself. Every village kept its warriors at home.

The Spartan general directed his army against the isolated city in line of columns widely separated. The thousand Peloponnesians with the Ambraciots formed the left column, under his personal command. The right consisted of the troops from Leucas and Anactorium and their allies. A dense mass of barbarians formed the centre. No attempt was made by scouts, orderlies, or signallers to keep the columns in touch, and at times they were even out of sight of one another. As day declined, the right and left, which were marching in due order and precaution, halted and made ready to encamp. But the barbarian centre, confident and careless, pushed on at top speed, to have the sole glory of the capture and plunder of the town. So they disappeared in the distance.

The men of Stratus saw them coming. Hastily they set an ambuscade outside the city gates. The barbarians plunged headlong into the trap. Troops from the city sallied out upon them and sprang up from the ambush on either hand. They broke and fled in utter panic.

Down upon Cnemus and his Greeks the fugitives came rushing, with the enemy in hot pursuit. He acted with the skill of a trained soldier, drawing his wings together and confronting the foe boldly and in order. The pursuers halted. The Acarnanians were famous for their use of the sling. A rain of stones fell upon Cnemus' men at a short distance. In the face of their nimble opponents they dared not break ranks to attack. They stood rooted to the spot, suffering grievously.

The coming of night saved them. Under its sheltering darkness Cnemus hastily withdrew his whole force, marching nine miles west to reach the river Anapus, where he halted in safety. The men of Stratus did not pursue, and the countryside was not yet so roused that its united army could be launched against the defeated enemy. Next day, under flag of truce, Cnemus recovered his dead, and, the men of Oeniadae coming to his rescue, he marched away unpursued down-stream to the coast and so to the sheltering city in the marshes. There he dismissed his allies back to their several homes. And the men of Stratus justly raised a trophy in honour of their "battle with the barbarians".[{219}]

Soon after, Cnemus himself sailed away to Cyllene to join the relics of the Corinthian fleet escaped from the defeat by Phormio at Chalcis. There he prepared to try his own fortunes once more, this time at sea against the Athenian admiral. How he fared at the battle of Naupactus has

been told already.{220} Cnemus was but a blunderer, both by land and by sea. The great Ambraciot project had ended in disaster.

Of Phormio's activities after his second victory, of his return to Athens in the spring of 428 B.C., of his death and his fame, the story has also been told. His rival Cnemus must be allowed to make now his own last appearance upon the stage of events.

### *§ 3. The raid on Salamis*{221}

Cnemus with his discomfited squadron fled to Corinth after his defeat at Naupactus, and there, in that rich and comfortable city, he stayed, Brasidas and his other comrades in misfortune keeping him company. There came to him one day at the approach of this winter of 429 B.C. certain Megarians with a bold suggestion. Peiraeus, Athens' own great port and arsenal, lay across the water only a bare 20 miles away from Nisaea, Megara's harbour on the Saronic Gulf. The entrance to Peiraeus harbour, they said, was open and un guarded, "as was natural", adds Thucydides, "since the Athenians were complete masters of the sea". There were neither troops in the port nor guard-ships on watch outside the harbour mouth. The place invited a raid. There were, moreover, at the moment as many as 40 ships lying in the docks at Nisaea. Let Cnemus bring his sailors over the isthmus by land from Corinth to Megara, man the ships, and descend, a bolt from the blue, upon Peiraeus.

It was a golden opportunity in very truth. No one in Athens had ever dreamed of an open attack by sea upon Peiraeus. How was it conceivable? Yet the Athenians' blunder was a grievous one. They claimed entire freedom of action for their fleet, as was natural. Yet they had failed to realise the one indispensable prerequisite for such freedom, that the fleet's base must be secure and not demand that fleet itself to protect it.{222} The Spartan commanders immediately snatched at the idea. Their sailors crossed the isthmus of Corinth, each man carrying his own rowing-pad, his oar, and the thong which served the oar as rowlock. The 40 ships at Nisaea seem to have lacked these essentials. The men reached Nisaea by night, went aboard, and put out to sea. They had had a long march of nearly 30 miles of mountain road. But they manned the ships at once. Then Cnemus' heart failed him when the friendly coast vanished in the dark behind him. There loomed up in front of him the near promontory of Salamis, four miles away. Salamis was a hostile shore. Salamis would suit admirably for a raid. There was just one fort upon the promontory at Budorum, and three enemy ships were posted off the point to see that nothing came into or out of Megara by sea. Cnemus and his colleagues gave up the

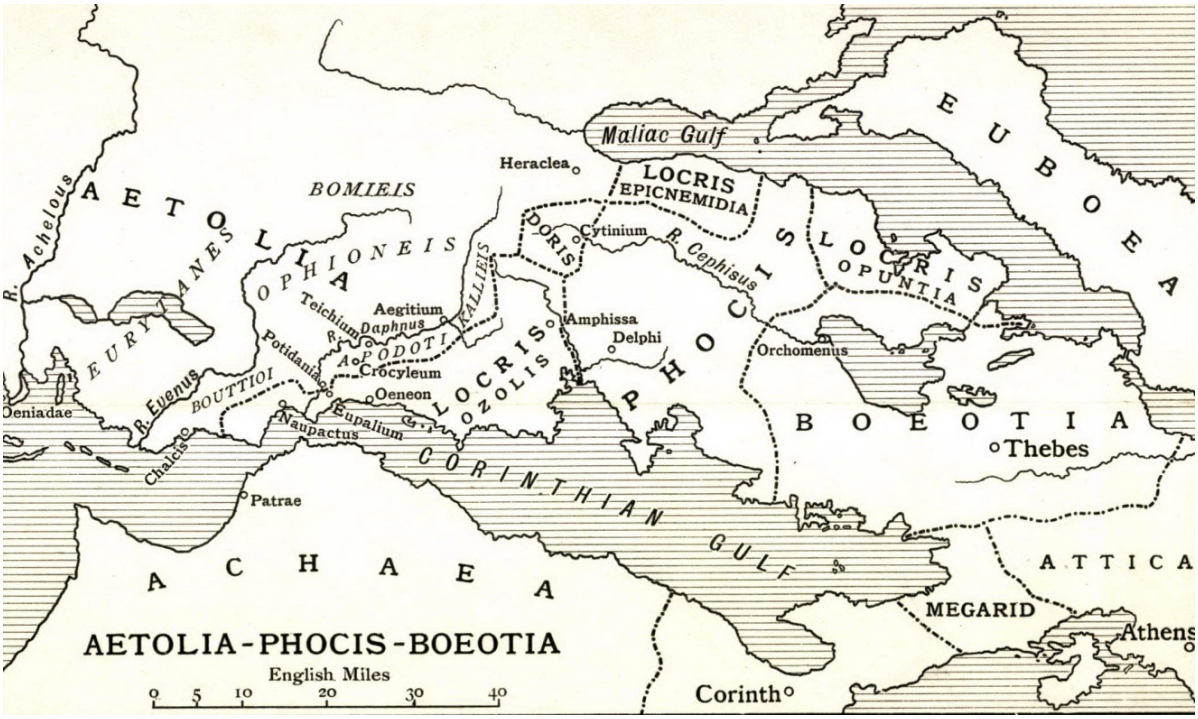
original idea and steered for Salamis. Here they had some hours of undisputed enjoyment. They assailed the fort, towed away the three ships (their crews were either not on board at night or promptly swam ashore), and roamed up and down the greater part of the island, collecting many prisoners and much spoil.




Meanwhile the alarm was given. Fire-signals woke Peiraeus and Athens herself to intense panic. Peiraeus believed that the foe were hard upon them: Athens that they were already masters of Peiraeus. In actual fact, says Thucydides, there was nothing to prevent the raiders sailing right into Peiraeus harbour had they risked it. Their commanders later on pleaded that the wind had been contrary. “The wind would not have prevented it”, the historian remarks coldly. At dawn the whole warrior population of Athens came pouring down tumultuously into Peiraeus. In frantic haste sailors swarmed on shipboard, while the troops spread out to guard the port. Out sailed the avenging fleet. But when they reached Salamis, the island was ravaged and the foe was gone. At first sight of the coming ships Cnemus had retired with all celerity home to Nisaea. His 40 ships had been so long laid up in port that they were leaking badly. The sooner on all accounts he was home again the better. The Athenians sadly gave up the pursuit. They had at least learnt one lesson, to close Peiraeus harbour mouth and guard it in future.

This raid so far as Salamis is concerned was a success. Thucydides is clearly so struck by the brilliance of the original idea that he is almost regretful that Cnemus’ courage failed him at

the last moment. The Megarians are indeed to be congratulated on the idea of a raid of greater daring and of fairer promise than ever was the wanton German bombardment of undefended Hartlepool and Whitby. Like so many plans in war, the raid on the Peiraeus ought to have succeeded and did not. Probably it was too ambitious in view of the quality of the troops and sailors to whom it was entrusted and especially of that of their commander. Cnemus was acting under no instructions when he turned aside from his main object, the Peiraeus, to the very minor one of Salamis. Drake and Norris, admirals of the "Counter-Armada" of 1589, were diverted from their main object, the capture of Lisbon, to a very secondary one, the raiding of Corunna, by Elizabeth's express orders. For that failure the Queen must bear the blame. But the Spartan failure now, as on a very similar occasion fifteen years later,[{223}] was due to a faint-hearted commander. There is no evidence that Sparta ever used Cnemus again. But he has distracted our attention from the west, the scene of his earlier failures, perhaps too long.




### *§ 4. Demosthenes' Aetolian expedition*

The two years which followed the year of battles, 429 B.C., were inglorious to both sides alike in the west. In 428 B.C. Phormio's son Asopius arrived at Naupactus with a dozen ships. The Acarnanians, who had specially begged for his coming in their affection for his father, flocked to his standard. But fate dealt hardly with Asopius. He was beaten off in an attack on Oeniadae, and, making a descent upon Leucas, was killed at Nericum on that island.[{224}]

After this, the interest for the time being shifts wholly to Corcyra and its bitter faction-fighting. How, in 427 B.C., the pusillanimous Alcidas sailed north to help the oligarchs upon that blood-stained island, and how he fled south again at the coming of the Athenian squadron under Eurymedon, are tales already told.{225} Then the maddened democrats, more treacherous than any Communist of the Barricades, took their vengeance upon the opposite party. Those who escaped the horrors of the massacre fortified themselves at last upon Mount Istone on the north of the island, and, burning their boats lest they should ever dream of flight, ravaged and plundered without pause or mercy.{226} Truly the war on Corcyra was a war of fire and a truceless war. Never, until perhaps our own day, had red revolution, that party faction which was the undying curse of ancient Greece, given birth to fouler deeds of crime. And Thucydides himself turns aside to dwell in calm and stately language upon the causes and the nature of that revolutionary spirit of class-hatred. Beneath the surface of his quiet analysis there glows the hidden fire of generous indignation, and his chapters{227} have burnt themselves, and may have cause to burn themselves again, upon the remembrance of mankind.

Then, in the summer of 426 B.C., operations of war began again in the district, and new commanders claim attention. In that summer the Athenians sent out two new generals to the west, Demosthenes and Procles, with 30 ships. It was a year crowded with events, and, in this district, decisive of the issue in favour of Athens. The new general Demosthenes, who had hitherto enjoyed no independent command, was to show himself among the most brilliant, and the only brilliant of Athenian tacticians in the entire war. But he began inauspiciously enough by quarrelling with Athens' chief allies, the Acarnanians, and by involving himself and his men in such disaster as nearly cost him his life in the dark forest land of Aetolia, and his city all that she had hitherto gained in the north-west. Both quarrel and disaster were closely connected.

The Athenian ships sailed round the Peloponnese and up north to the hostile island of Leucas. The allies of Athens in the district gathered to join forces, the Acarnanians in full strength, 15 ships from Corcyra, Messenians from Naupactus, and contingents from Cephallenia and Zacynthus. They ravaged the fields of the Leucadians both on the mainland opposite the island and on the island itself. They were too strong for the men of the city of Leucas by themselves to withstand, and Sparta had as yet sent no help. The citizens remained within the shelter of their walls.

The Acarnanians were eager to take the city by blockade. All that was needed, they urged the Athenian commanders, was the building of a wall across the sandy isthmus which then

linked the so-called island with the mainland. But Demosthenes was not over-interested in the district as an isolated theatre of war. A grander scheme of strategy was in his mind. Leaving Leucas to its own devices, he moved his entire force to Sollium and there expounded his plan to the very sulky Acarnanians.{228}

The Messenians at Naupactus had long been worried by the Aetolian tribes in their neighborhood. Aetolia was a land of dense forests, ravines, and well-nigh trackless mountains. Its tribes were numerous and savage, the largest of them, the Eurytanes, "speak a language more unintelligible than any of their neighbours", says Thucydides, "and are believed to eat raw flesh".{229} The natives dwelt after the old primitive fashion in unwalled villages in the clearings of their forests. They stretched away to touch the borders of Phocis and towards the Maliac Gulf on the north-east. All of them were warriors and hunters with hunters' weapons. Walled cities and heavy armour were equally strange to these, the Red Indians of ancient Greece. There was little love lost between the tribesmen and the alien settlers who had seized the one good harbour, Naupactus, of the coast-line.

In Demosthenes and his large array the Messenians of Naupactus saw their chance. They came to him at Leucas and urged him to attack and conquer Aetolia. It was not a difficult enterprise, they asserted, although the natives were, as they admitted, warlike. But let him deal with them rapidly, tribe by tribe, and the whole country must soon be his. Let him make a beginning with the Apodoti in the hills immediately behind the coast-line beyond the lower course of the river Daphnus (the Mornos of today) to the north-east of Naupactus. Then let him cross the river westwards against the Ophioneis on the farther bank, and so push forward against the Eurytanes themselves beyond the Evenus. When these, the chief folk, were quelled, no other tribe in the whole district but would at once submit.

The simplicity of the Messenians' plan, however vague and airy, in the absence of any available maps, it must seem to the Athenian soldier, might strike him as more engaging than its positive advantages. Leucas would surely be a far more profitable prey than this Aetolian savage wilderness of mountain and forest. Nothing else, it might well be, was of such concern to his Messenians. But the Athenian mind grasped at a far nobler plan. Devised on the spot this can scarcely have been. There was a new and fiery spirit abroad in the war councils of Athens when Demosthenes left the city for the west. The new statesman Cleon had no love for passive endurance any more. Nicias, too, who also makes his first appearance in the war in this same summer, was in the first flush of an unwonted energy. The War Office, in its zeal for the "new

offensive", looked to the dour, bitter enemy on their northern frontier, Boeotia. There were many wrongs of the invasions of the last five years to avenge. The time for action had come at last. They would assail Boeotia by land. Not indeed theirs to march over the mountain passes straight on Thebes. That still would be an over-risky undertaking. The front door was heavily barred and bolted. But there were side entrances on the coast, Oropus way. And there was a back door down the Cephisus river from its source in the hills of Doris far away in the north-west. To come down unexpectedly on the enemy by the back-door—this should be Demosthenes' business. Oropus and Tanagra, to be reached, the one by the fleet of Nicias, the other by the great land army under Eurymedon, saviour of Corcyra in the preceding year—these were the concerns of the War Office at home. How many earnest talks did Demosthenes have with Eurymedon in the winter before they parted on their allotted tasks? And there were still many secret friends of Athens in the north-west of Boeotia, "disgruntled democrats" at Chaeronea and elsewhere who had small love for Thebes. How could they be reached and encouraged to revolt save by an Athenian army coming down the great highway from the north-west? Nicias with a powerful fleet at Oropus, Eurymedon with a great army at Tanagra, the north of Boeotia in arms—what would harassed Thebes do then? Let Demosthenes do his part. The expeditions this summer to Oropus and to Tanagra duly took place. But what happened to Demosthenes?

At the very outset of this remarkable enterprise that unfortunate strategist had met with a rude rebuff. With Boeotia in his mind he had listened eagerly to his Messenians' assurances. Here up the ready access of the Daphnus river valley lay the route to Boeotia through Aetolia. His first objective was a little mountain town, Cytinium in Doris, at the head waters of the Cephisus. The obvious route to Cytinium from the southern waters of the Corinthian Gulf was by the highway from Cirrha on the gulf straight north. Unhappily on this road lay Amphissa, chief city and stronghold of the Ozolian Locrians. Characteristically enough, the city was lukewarm if not actually hostile to Athens, while the Locrians themselves of the countryside were friendly.{230} Moreover, Cirrha was too far from Naupactus and too near to Corinth. Some alternative route must be found which turned the flank of Amphissa. The Daphnus valley offered itself. From the upper valley in the district of the Aetolian tribe the Kallieis it was but a bee-line of eight miles over the watershed hills due east to strike the Amphissa-Cytinium road north of the former city. So Demosthenes would reach Cytinium without hindrance and march cheerfully down Cephisus river, keeping north of Parnassus ridge lying on his right flank, through Phocis in full cry for the Boeotian frontier.

To the Messenians the Aetolian campaign was just part of a great scheme to isolate Ambracia. It was not in this sense that Demosthenes embraced it eagerly; not in this sense that he expounded it to his surprised Acarnanian and Corcyrean allies at Sollium.

What was Boeotia to these? Aetolia might be a matter of mild if unduly remote interest. Boeotia was a name in the distance, far beneath their horizon. Demosthenes' plan was a wild goose chase, and would take him away out of their ken. What were he and his 30 ships doing in the west if not to help Athens' faithful allies here to hold their own and plunder the enemy? Phormio had known his business. The unhappy Asopius had tried his best. But—Demosthenes! Aetolia! Boeotia!

There was bad trouble in the camp at Sollium. Back to Corcyra sailed the 15 Corcyrean ships. The Acarnanian army flatly refused its help.

Demosthenes was regretful. The Acarnanians would have been particularly useful. But he had plenty of men without them. With those that remained he sailed back to the gulf and landed at Oeneon, a small port nine miles east of Naupactus. This he had selected as his starting-point. He sent word to the Locrians up country to meet him in the interior with their full levy; engaged a Messenian, Chromon by name, as guide; and, with the Messenians to advise him continually and 300 young Athenian hoplites who were serving as marines on ship on whom to place complete reliance, he gave the word to march. Even some Aetolians, he hopefully reflected, might join the expedition as it marched forwards.

Speed, the Messenians urged, speed was everything, before the tribes could muster in force together. But Demosthenes was troubled. He had a company of archers. But he needed also auxiliaries who knew the Aetolians and their manner of fighting. The Acarnanians were likely to be sorely missed. He must have the Locrians instead, and these had not yet arrived. The enemy's borders lay but a few miles away. When would the Locrians come?

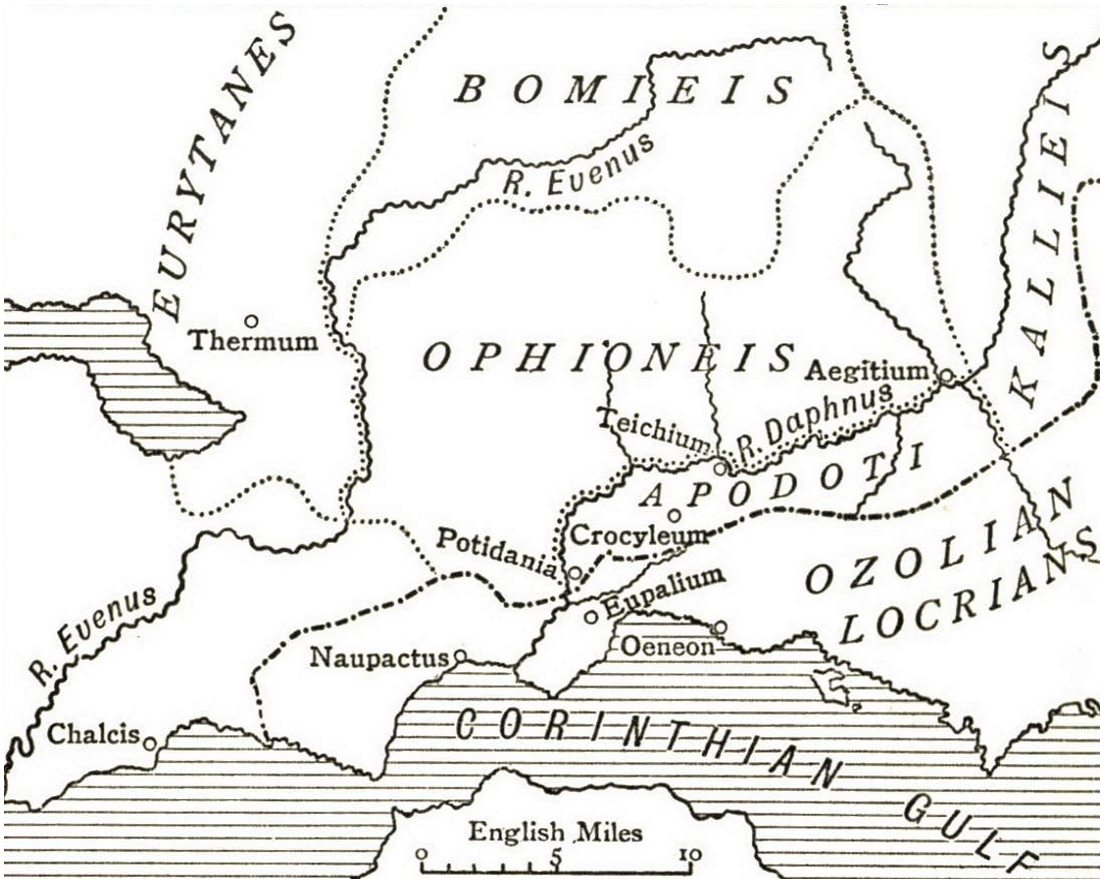
On the first day of the march from Oeneon, the modern Klima, the army moved westwards, parallel to the sea, and encamped for the night hard by Eupalium, the modern Sules, at the Temple of Nemean Zeus. Early next morning it crossed the frontier of the Apodoti, and took possession of Potidania, the modern Omer Effendi, a hamlet which guarded the one ford over the lower river Daphnus, in an angle of the river. There was no track up the river-bank, and Demosthenes next day struck over the hills a bare six miles to Crocyleum, the modern Ghumaii. Here he was just four miles as the crow flies from the starting-point Oeneon. On the fourth day

the army made a better effort, reaching Teichium, the modern Lykochori, three and a half hours' ride from Crocyleum. Here Demosthenes called a halt. He sent back the spoils of these three insignificant Aetolian settlements to Eupalium. They can hardly have been worth the sending. And still there were no Locrians. The army now lay on the south bank of the Daphnus again. Across the river was the country of another Aetolian tribe, the Ophioneis. Here lay its way, did it advance farther.

The slow pace of the advance up to this point is amazing. The army had moved by quite "ridiculously short stages", says the modern topographer. "The Athenian general", he adds, rather heavily, "was impaled upon the horns of a fatal dilemma, vacillating between the alternatives of a daring initiative and a cautious, methodical policy until his enemies forced upon him a solution in the shape of hopeless retreat."{231}

In fact, at Teichium Demosthenes' heart misgave him badly. Still no Locrians, a treacherous river, and gloomy forests! Had he not better abandon the whole scheme, or turn it into a purely "Aetolian project", return to Naupactus, and threaten the Ophioneis in a later campaign?

The Messenians had no misgivings. Let him only push on, they repeated, and all would be well. Luck also seemed to smile on him. He had reached so far without the least hindrance. "Perhaps he had never seen the enemy at all." Trusting his luck would still hold,{232} Demosthenes resolved to make the plunge. The advance was resumed, and, at last, when it was all too late, with greater energy.



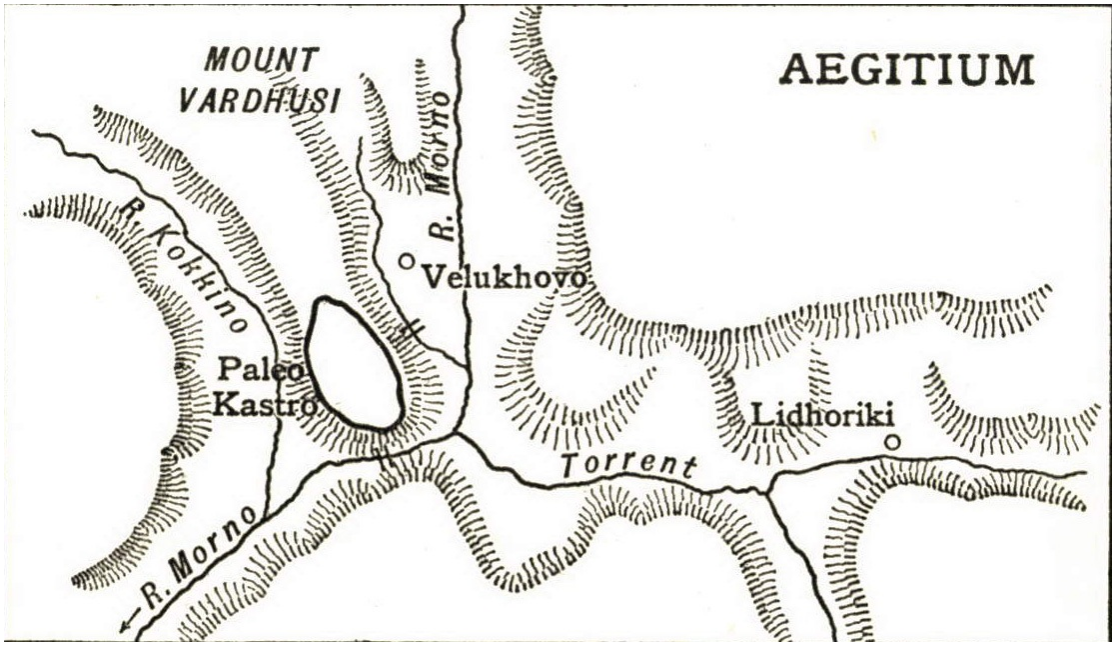

Ten miles beyond Teichium up-stream, on the northern bank of the Daphnus, at a meeting-place of many waters, there was an Aetolian settlement of greater importance, Aegitium, the modern Kastro of Veluchovos, on the foot-hills of Vardhusi mountain, the strongest fortress site in Aetolia. Three valleys with steep rocky slopes led down upon it.{233}

Here first the tribes were likely to muster to bar the way. Built on heights above the Mornos valley, the fortress was conspicuous at a distance to the army pushing up the river.

The fiery cross had already borne the news of the invasion over the mountains of the land to its most distant tribes. Even the remote Bomieis and Kallieis came swarming to the rescue, converging on Aegitium. Demosthenes, pushing at last rapidly up-stream, found the fort itself empty. The inhabitants had stolen away to the refuge of the heights overhanging it on the north and north-east. But every hillside was thick with the enemy from far and near. No sooner had Demosthenes seized the place than the tribesmen came swarming down upon the Athenian army on every side, and showers of darts fell upon the worried troops.

It was no ordered battle such as the Athenian heavy-armed soldier loved. When he charged, the nimble foe fled before him. When he retreated, the natives were back pressing fiercely upon him. Such assailants on broken hilly ground can only be routed by men equally

unencumbered and by flank attacks. The helpless Athenian general could only stand fast, and keep the natives off by arrow-fire. So long as his ammunition lasted, so long he might maintain his ground. Presently the store of arrows failed, the captain of the archers fell slain, the tribesmen ventured closer and closer, the rain of enemy missiles grew thicker, the Athenians wavered, lost their order, broke, and fled.




It was a hideous rout and the most joyful of pursuits. In that "wilderness of scrub and ravine"[{234}] the fugitives had no chance. Every way was strange to them, every hillside an enemy. Their own guide, Chromon, had been killed. The greater number got into the pathless forest. The Aetolians set fire to the undergrowth and burnt their enemy alive.

"So the Athenians tried every means of escape and perished in all manner of ways", writes Thucydides. The remnant made their way back over the broken country, even today practically a desert, the dozen miles to the sea and Oeneon, Demosthenes among them. His colleague Procles was killed and with him 120 of the Athenian hoplites, "all in the flower of their youth: they were the very finest men whom the city of Athens lost during the war".[{235}]

So the Aetolian expedition ended very speedily in complete disaster. Demosthenes conveyed the survivors back to Naupactus. His Athenians he sent off home by ship to Athens. He himself stayed at Naupactus. "For after what had happened he feared the anger of the Athenians."[{236}] In this at least he acted sagaciously.

The Athenian general has been the target for some bitter and contemptuous criticism for the

whole plan of the Aetolian expedition. “There was no reason to suppose, as he did, that the conquest of Aetolia would be a matter of course; that the Phocians, Sparta’s allies, would join him if he reached them; or that if he and his small force did manage to struggle through to the Boeotian frontier the Boeotians would have been panic-stricken. On the contrary, they would instantly have descended upon and annihilated him. He advanced ‘trusting to luck’. Luck, it is suggested, rarely did him a kinder turn than when it allowed the Aetolians to nip his project in the very early bud.”{237}

Neither does it help his reputation to follow an English historian in suggesting that, as the Spartans were just founding a settlement at Heraclea near the Maliac Gulf, Demosthenes intended to threaten this from Doris! He really need not be made responsible for this “eminently impracticable plan”, as the same historian then himself avows such to be.{238}

The immediate causes of the disaster at Aegitium have become clear from the narrative. The Acarnanian refusal to co-operate and the absence of the Locrians, for whom he waited too long, deprived Demosthenes of the light-armed troops which were essential for success. The local knowledge of the Messenians was the best available, but they had no warrant for their advice. The system of communication from Aetolian village to village was extraordinarily good, as between African villages today, and the tribesmen were mustering in force before ever Demosthenes left Oeneon. Forest fighting, too, was a very novel experience for an Athenian.{239} The general from the first had no chance. At least he learnt and in due course applied one useful lesson from his doleful experience, the value of light-armed troops against heavy-armed in broken country.

The great strategical idea of attack on Boeotia is not to be so cavalierly dismissed, if it be held that co-operation was from the first planned with Nicias and Eurymedon at Tanagra. This is not suggested by Thucydides. It remains none the less quite an attractive idea, inasmuch as the strategy of offence against Boeotia devised two years later, as will be seen, is planned on much the same lines.

Demosthenes may have been the Athenian De Wet, “more of a tactician than a strategist”,{240} and we can let luck play the part in his story we please, so long as we do not ridiculously turn Thucydides into a tragic dramatist. Perhaps, even for the Aetolian expedition, the general merits more consideration from history than he would have received, as he very well knew, from a jury of his indignant countrymen.

### *§ 5. Demosthenes' victories at Olpae and Idomene*

The news of the disaster at Aegitium was received with jubilation by all the enemies of Athens. An Aetolian embassy went to Corinth and Sparta, and persuaded the Spartan Government to enter upon vigorous reprisals immediately. As many as 3000 Peloponnesian troops were at once concentrated at Delphi under a Spartan general named Eurylochus, with whom two other Spartans, Macarius and Menedaeus, were associated in the command. The object of the expedition was Naupactus itself, the garrison of which was so depleted as to have too few men even to guard the circuit of its wall. If only Naupactus could be taken, there was a final end of Athenian interference in the district. Demosthenes by his defeat had come near to costing the Athenians very dear. He himself saved the situation. Timely news reached him of the coming attack. He hurried off to Acarnania and begged for help. The Acarnanians were still sulky with him. They could hardly forgive his refusal to blockade Leucas. But his eager entreaties won the day, and they gave him a thousand men. Just in time he brought them back triumphantly by sea to Naupactus. He had enough men now to guard the walls.

So the disconsolate Eurylochus thought. He for his part had done well. But the land march from Delphi had cost him time. He had had to make his way through the length of Locris from Cytinium, whither he had marched from Delphi. It took time to collect hostages from a round dozen Locrian tribes or cities and deposit them at Cytinium before he started. The town of Amphissa gave them readily enough, and the other Locrian communities followed suit, being thoroughly scared. Most joined the expedition, but one small folk at least refused this complaisance, and another had to be persuaded even to give hostages by the capture of a village. All this took time. Hence when Eurylochus came to the end of his 50 mile march from Cytinium by Amphissa to Naupactus, he had to content himself with the capture of Oeneon and Eupalium *en route,* and leave Naupactus severely alone. It was too strongly garrisoned, he decided, to give any chance for assault. Demosthenes had saved the town. The Spartan contented himself for the moment with the capture of small Molycria round Rhium promontory, six miles west of Naupactus.

This was but an inglorious finale for a great effort. Richer prospects opened out before him. The Ambraciots had seized the opportunity and sent inviting him to their country. Let him help them take Amphilochian Argos, overrun Amphilochia, crush Acarnania. "The whole continent" would thus come over to the Lacedaemonians.

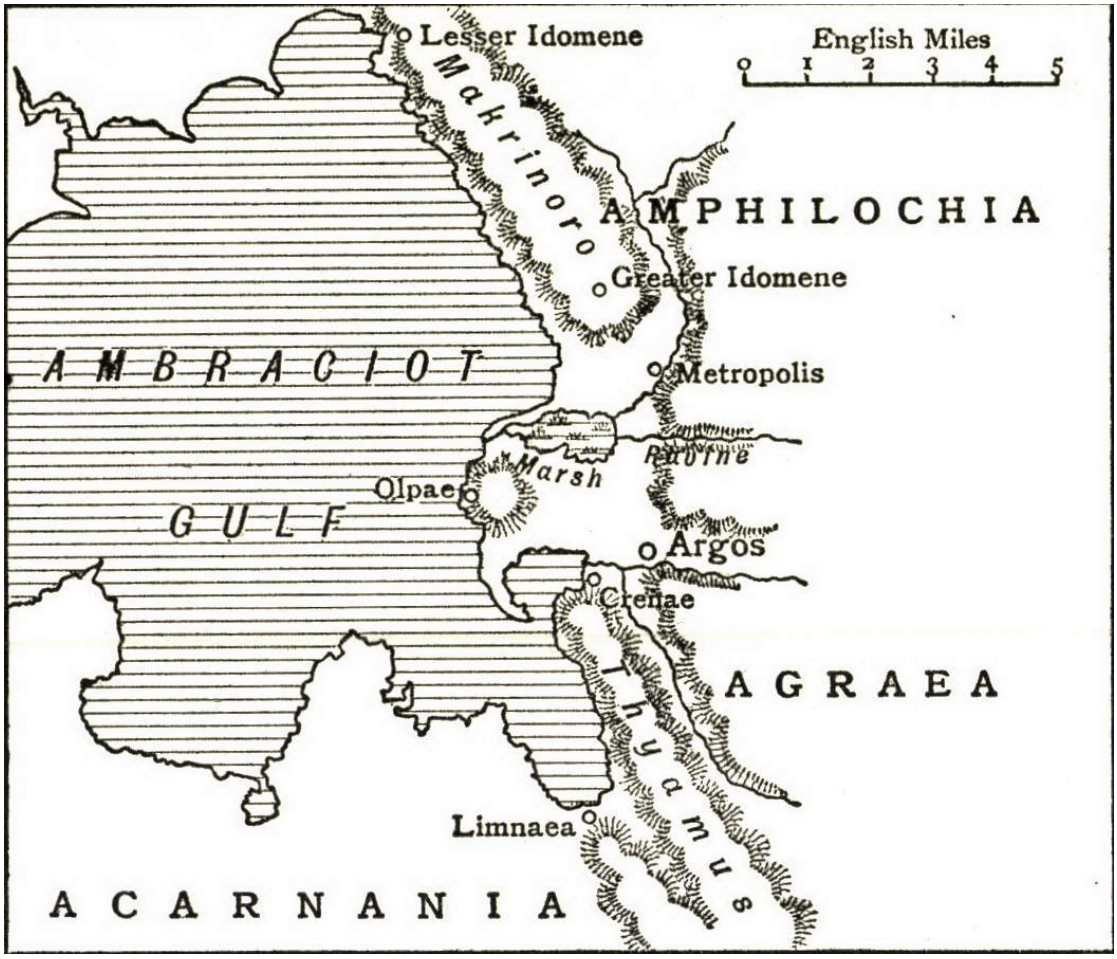
Eurylochus was pleased with the idea. The Ambraciots were not yet ready. He quartered his

army among the towns of “Old Aetolia” between the rivers Evenus and Achelous, at Calydon, Pleuron, Proschium, and elsewhere, and waited to be summoned north. His Aetolian allies who had joined him outside Naupactus he judged of small use and dismissed them back to their villages. The summer passed away and winter drew on apace.{241}

Then the Ambraciots marched south against Argos. They were possibly one, possibly three thousand hoplites strong.{242} They seized the strong hill fort of Olpae on the shore of the Ambraciot Gulf, three miles from the city, and sent word to Eurylochus. The Spartan, collecting all his forces at Proschium, crossed the Achelous and marched north to join his allies. Meanwhile the Acarnanians had taken the field. They threw part of their forces into Argos, to help defend the town. With the rest they took up a position at Crenae, “The Wells”, 2½, miles to the south-east of Olpae, and also on the shores of the gulf. Here they lay in wait to intercept Eurylochus. It was above all things important to prevent the two enemy armies joining. It was now also their turn to beg Demosthenes to hasten to their aid from Naupactus. This was the very crisis of the whole war to the whole district. They prayed him urgently to come and take command of the entire operations. They also sent to implore a squadron of 20 Athenian ships then cruising in western waters to come as well. There was no enemy force at sea to stop them. And the Ambraciots at Olpae on their part sent to Ambracia urging the despatch of the whole levy of the rest of their countrymen to join them. Eurylochus, they reflected, might not be able to get through Acarnania, in which case the more of their own men they had at Olpae, either for fighting or for retreat, the better. Meanwhile the first levies on both sides stayed quietly in their positions, the Ambraciots at Olpae, the Acarnanians at “The Wells”.{243}

Eurylochus marched north through the length of Acarnania at top speed. The land was empty, for the men had all obeyed the call to Argos. The Spartan was therefore unopposed. Only Stratus was garrisoned, and he avoided that city by taking the road nine miles west of it through Phoetiae. From Phoetiae he marched through Medeon to Limnaea, where he reached the gulf. Just north of Limnaea the army of the enemy at Crenae and the city of Argos itself now lay in his path. With great skill Eurylochus, waiting for night to fall, struck up into the wild and lonely foot-hills of Mount Thyamus on his right, and came down under cover of the dark, slipping unseen between Crenae on his left and the city of Argos on his right. The distance between the two is a bare mile, and neither the outposts of the army at “The Wells” nor the sentries on the walls of Argos can be commended. The Spartan got through without losing a

man and joined the Ambraciots at Olpae. He was now stronger in numbers than any force which could be brought against him, and powerful reinforcements could also be expected any day from Ambracia. He moved his combined forces a few miles to the north and away inland from the sea, to Metropolis, which lay under the southern edge of the Makrinoro heights. There he was nearer Ambracia and not hampered by an unfriendly sea on the flank and a swamp on his rear, as would have been the case if he had formed line of battle at Olpae.[{244}]




Eurylochus had indubitably won the first, the strategic, victory of the campaign. Spartans had no fear of night marching, as King Agis also showed brilliantly a few years later. It only remained for a tactical victory to crown his strategical success. Tactics, however, have sometimes spoilt strategy.

For now the master tactician arrived to command the other side. It was no fault of Demosthenes that Eurylochus had reached Olpae. The enemy were already at Metropolis when he sailed into the gulf with the 20 ships of Athens as well. The baffled army at “The Wells” had retired into Argos. Demosthenes moored his ships off Olpae and assumed command of the whole of the available forces of Acarnanians, Amphilochians, 200 Messenian hoplites, and

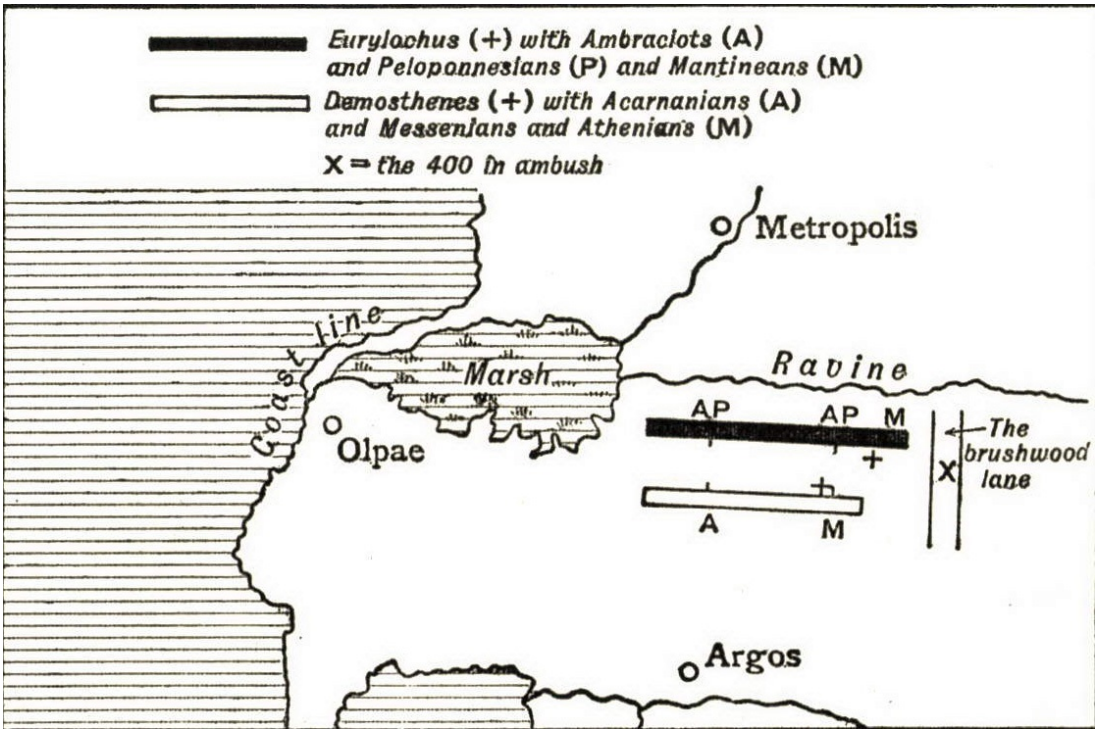
just 60 Athenian archers. The last two contingents he had brought with him from Naupactus, the archers being those who were left him after the losses suffered by the corps in the disaster of Aegitium. At head of his entire army he moved out from Argos and took up a position east of Olpae. Eurylochus moved out of Metropolis to meet him, and halted where a deep ravine separated the opposing forces. For five days the generals kept their men within their lines. On the sixth day Eurylochus arrayed his army in order of battle, probably crossing to the enemy's side of the ravine. He already outnumbered his foe, and decided to wait no longer for the coming reinforcements from Ambracia, of whom there was no sign. Two or three days more patience on the Spartan's part, and Athens' fleet might never have sailed for Sicily ten years later.

When the armies stood face to face, Demosthenes, who took the right of his line with his Messenians and archers, saw that the enemy's left, where Eurylochus himself stood with the best of his Peloponnesians, the men of Mantinea, overlapped and threatened to enclose his own right. He had time to hide 400 men in a hollow lane overgrown with brushwood which lay on the extreme right of the battle-field. This ambush it was which won the day.

For when battle was joined, Eurylochus' right wing, where Ambraciots and Peloponnesians were intermingled, drove back the Acarnanians on Demosthenes' left wing, and these fled towards Argos. But when the victors stayed their pursuit and turned back again towards the battle-field, they saw the greater part of their army in melancholy rout. Eurylochus had led his own wing forward, and had bent it round to overlap the enemy, as Demosthenes had foreseen. Then there rose up the 400 from their ambush and fell shouting upon the backs of the foe. The surprise was complete. The whole of the Peloponnesian left was crumpled up. They fled without striking a blow. The panic spread along the line. It seized their comrades of the right as they returned to the scene. The whole army ran for Olpae fort. This was the kind of fighting the Messenians above all men enjoyed. Many of the runners were cut down in the confusion of the flight or as they herded together in the struggle to get in at the gate of the fort. Only the Mantineans drew off in order and retreated as a disciplined force. When evening came, the defeated Peloponnesian and Ambraciot army found itself cooped up within Olpae's walls, a victorious army outside, and the enemy fleet riding the waters of the gulf just beneath, while among their dead on the battle-field lay Eurylochus himself, and Macarius, one of the other two Spartan generals. Demosthenes had won a most notable victory over superior numbers by the tactical device of the ambush, at a cost to himself of but 300 slain. And he held the enemy's

southern army in the hollow of his hand. Menedaeus, its sole surviving commander, was truly in sorry plight, caught in Olpae fort.[{245}]

"Armies shut up in a fortress after lost battles are themselves almost invariably lost", writes the German expert, Von der Goltz.[{246}] The Spartan general was in no mind to stand a siege. In the small fort of Olpae there can have been little or no food. In the north, Ambracia way, there might perhaps be another army, or there might not. Nothing had been heard of it. Unexpectedly promoted to chief command, Menedaeus had but one single idea in all his narrow Spartan head —escape for himself and his army. He sent parleying with Demosthenes for permission to march away unmolested.




Demosthenes for his part was not too happy. At any moment another hostile army might come down upon him. He would gladly have his hands free to deal with this. Speedily he saw what fruit to pluck out of the situation. Menedaeus' request was refused. But a secret treaty, known on the one side to Demosthenes and his Acarnanian colleagues, on the other to Menedaeus, the Mantineans, and other Peloponnesians, was concluded allowing these and these only to depart.[{247}]

Menedaeus and his friends jumped at the chance of escape. For the Ambraciots the Spartan cared not one whit. Theirs had been the unlucky invitation. Let them pay the price for it. His duty to his Home Government was to bring his own excellent Peloponnesian troops back safe

to serve in other and more attractive theatres of war. This and this only Sparta would demand of him. No awkward questions would be asked concerning the means which he used to achieve this end.

And so, Thucydides writes, the Peloponnesians hastily buried their dead, and in the afternoon of this the day after the battle,

> "the Mantineans and the others who were included in the treaty went out on pretence of gathering herbs and sticks, and stole away one by one, picking up as they went along what they pretended to be looking for. But, as they got farther away from Olpae, they quickened their steps, and then the Ambraciots and others who happened to collect on the instant, when they saw that they were leaving, ran after them at full speed, wanting to catch them up. The Acarnanians at first thought that none of the fugitives were protected by a treaty, and pursued after the Peloponnesians. Some of their officers tried to hold them back, explaining how matters stood, whereon a soldier, suspecting some treachery, shot at them. Presently, however, they let the Mantineans and Peloponnesians go, but started killing the Ambraciots. And there was great contention and ignorance whether a man were a Peloponnesian or an Ambraciot."{248}

Two hundred fugitives were cut down in cold blood in this way. The rest who escaped fled over Thyamus to the friendly land of the Agraeans, whose King, Salynthius, received them kindly. Thence they made their way south to Oeniadae.

Demosthenes' stroke was a masterpiece of policy. Who in Ambracia would ever wish to look upon a Peloponnesian again after this display of what Thucydides himself, moved slightly for once, calls selfish treachery?{249} The Spartan reputation in the entire district was dead. However difficult Menedaeus' situation was, the ruse by which he extricated his own men is an affront to every possible code of military honour. We neither hear nor want to hear of him again.

Demosthenes, who proposed the terms, was probably highly delighted at the result. We must not look for scruples even in an Athenian. He had disposed of the entire southern army just in time, and had the whole of his force at his disposal to meet the new attack from the north. But it was only just in time. His success was a question of a few hours.

This urgency of time recalls a famous episode in the American Civil War. In September 1862, Lee with some 45,000 men was holding the position of Sharpsburg on the Antietam in Maryland north of the Potomac river. A Federal army at least half as strong again under McClellan was slowly moving against him through the town of Frederick on the north-east. In Lee's rear, 17 miles away, lay the Federal garrison of 12,500 men at the strong fortress of

Harper's Ferry. Lee's invasion of Maryland over the river from Virginia had for the moment cut the garrison off. But the relieving army was approaching. Lee risked everything to secure the prize. He had sent Stonewall Jackson with 25,000 men to move with the greatest possible speed on Harper's Ferry, take the place, and then rejoin at Sharpsburg. With the loss of but a hundred men Jackson scared the faint-hearted garrison of the fort into surrender. Back he rushed to the sound of the guns at Sharpsburg. The masses of the northerners were vigorously attacking the position, which Lee was holding with desperate courage, confident of Jackson's coming. At the very crisis, the latter's corps commander, A. P. Hill, came up hot haste and struck in. The attack was rolled back, and the great Southern general added yet another victory to the spoil of Harper's Ferry.

To the spoil of Olpae Demosthenes in 426 B.C. now was to add a second victory over the advancing army which should have relieved the fort. He too had to reckon his available time by hours. For on this same day, while the negotiations with Menedaeus were in progress, Demosthenes' scouts brought him word that the northern Ambraciot army was marching south. To the north of the marsh at Olpae there stretched the mountain tract of Makrinoro, attaining its greatest height at the peak of Greater Idomene which overhung Metropolis. The pass through the hills ran north-west from this point to the lower height of Lesser Idomene five miles away. To the east stretched away the wild region of the Amphilochian hills. To the west the ground fell to the shore of the Ambraciot Gulf. There was no time to be lost. While the general himself stayed outside Olpae to see the conclusion of that somewhat delicate business, he sent forward a part of his force with precise instructions. He himself would follow with the rest as soon as possible. The advance guard seized the height of Greater Idomene at nightfall. The enemy from the north about the same time having left Ambracia, eight miles away, reached Lesser Idomene and encamped there for the night. They were in blind ignorance both of the battle of the preceding day and of the presence of the advance guard of their foes five miles beyond. They supped, posted sentries, and went, the rest of them, to sleep.

Night was deepening when Demosthenes himself with the rest of his army arrived at Greater Idomene. He had called his men off from their chase of the Olpae garrison in the late afternoon of that winter day. Then after supper he came to join his advance guard with part of his main army. For he had already divided his force, and had sent the rest off to make their way, night notwithstanding, through the Amphilochian hills on the east till they reached the flank and rear of the enemy's camp on Lesser Idomene. In any suitable spot they were to lie hid in ambush.

These, his Amphilochian allies, who were light-armed troops and knew every inch of their own hills, moved quietly away and vanished northwards in the dark. Demosthenes gave them time to reach their allotted stations, resting his own men the while at Greater Idomene. Then, after midnight, he himself advanced up the pass towards the camp of the sleeping enemy. In the van he placed his Messenians (who spoke Dorian). “Answer in your own Dorian tongue when challenged,” he bade them. Close on their heels came the general himself with the flower of his army, the heavy-armed hoplites of Acarnania.

The sky was just growing pale in the east at that hour of earliest dawn when, at the “Stand to!”, men’s courage is lowest and their wits are least alert. The Ambraciot camp began to stir. Its sentries saw dimly a body of men moving rapidly upon them from the south. They challenged. The answer in the Dorian dialect reassured them. These must be their own friends, Eurylochus’ men, coming up to join them from Olpae. In a flash Demosthenes’ troops cut them down and fell upon the drowsy camp.

The surprise was complete, the slaughter speedy. Most of the Ambraciots were slain upon the spot. Those who fled over the hills fell into the ambushes where the Amphilochians lurked. Their nimble foes beset every path, overtook and slew without mercy every fugitive. Some of the Ambraciots even fled down to the seashore, and, seeing the enemy squadron cruising here, immediately off the land, as instructed by Demosthenes, they plunged into the water and swam out to the ships, “thinking it were better to die, if die they must, at hands of the Athenians rather than be slain by their barbarian and most detested foes, the Amphilochians”.[{250}] Very few came back at last to Ambracia, their city. The bodies lay strewn over the Makrinoro hills, and the victors gleefully despoiled them of their arms, carried them off, and heaped them high together in their camp, now in the plain near Olpae.[{251}]

Hither next day, the third day after the Olpae battle, the second after the garrison’s flight, there came a herald from the Ambraciot survivors of the southern army, sent by these to recover the bodies of those cut down in their escape from Olpae fort. He gazed with wonder at the huge heap of his compatriots’ weapons.

“Why so amazed?” one asked him, thinking he came from the remnants of the northern army, scattered at Idomene. “How many of you fell?”

“Some two hundred,” he replied.

“Here are the arms of more than a thousand,” his foe answered.

“Then they cannot be our men’s,” the herald said.

“They must be,” the other replied: “you fought yesterday at Idomene.”

“No, no,” said the herald; “we fought nobody yesterday. It was the day before, in the retreat.”

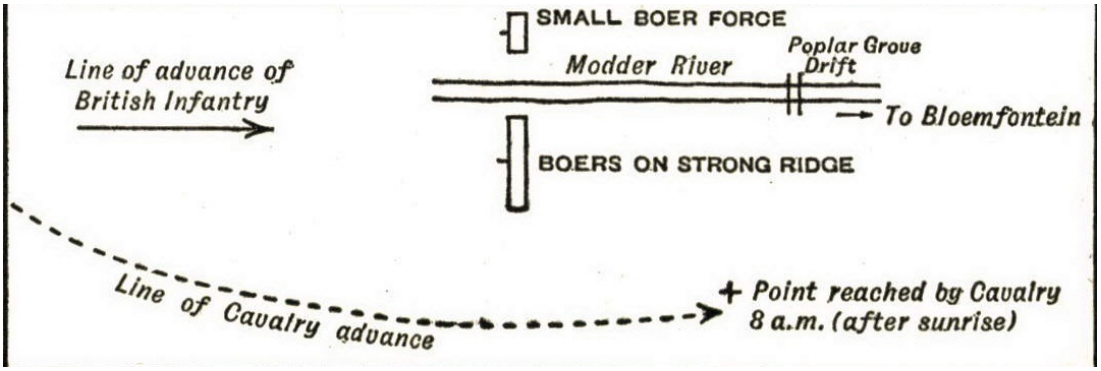
“Well,” the other answered, “these were men we fought yesterday, coming from Ambracia city to help.”

So when the herald heard this, and knew that the army from the city was destroyed, he uttered a cry of anguish and, overwhelmed by the greatness of the present evil, went away at once without doing his errand, and cared no longer to ask for the bodies of the dead.

“For indeed,” Thucydides concludes, “this was the very greatest calamity in the whole war which befel one single Hellenic city within so few days. I have not ventured to write the actual number of those who died, for it would pass men’s belief compared with the size of the city. This, however, I do know, that if the Acarnanians and Amphilochians had been willing to hearken to the persuasion of Demosthenes and the Athenians they might have taken and sacked Ambracia at the very first onset. But they would not, fearing that the Athenians if they got hold of the place would be more troublesome neighbours than ever the Ambraciots were.”{252}

Grote reckons the total number of Ambraciot dead at 6000. The German cuts this figure down by half.{253}

Demosthenes by skilful generalship had won a signal triumph, even though his allies denied him the final fruits of his two victories. His devices, the ambush previously prepared, the night-surprise, the march by night, the proper use and division of his troops, merited the success and the recognition which they gained.


SMALL BOER FORCE
Modder River
Poplar Grove Drift
Line of advance of British Infantry
To Bloemfontein
BOERS ON STRONG RIDGE
Line of Cavalry advance
Point reached by Cavalry 8 a.m. (after sunrise)

A modern parallel to Demosthenes’ tactics at Idomene may perhaps be of interest. For the Athenian’s devices were those employed by Lord Roberts in his advance on Bloemfontein after the victory of Paardeburg in the spring of 1900. The enemy had occupied a strong position

on a ridge upon the banks of the Modder river. In their rear was the one crossing of the stream at Poplar Grove Drift. The English general sent his cavalry under Sir John French on a wide detour to get round the position by night and seize the drift. The infantry, assailing the position at dawn, would then drive the Boers back upon the previously prepared ambush. Our plan miscarried. The cavalry took a wrong direction in the dark, and also, owing to the utter exhaustion of the horses, moved too slowly. Sunrise on March 7 found them barely in rear and in full view of the enemy. There was no surprise. The Boers quietly withdrew over the drift, and with comparative ease made their way to Bloemfontein, to the chagrin of the disappointed cavalry.

The actual political fruits of Demosthenes' masterly victories seemed meagre. If Sparta lost her popularity in the district owing to Menedaeus, Athens seems never to have had any popularity to lose. As soon as Demosthenes had sailed away again with his 20 Athenian ships to Naupactus, the old embittered foes, Ambraciots and Acarnanians and Amphilochians, met and came to so amicable an agreement that they concluded first a truce, then a defensive Alliance for a Hundred Years! The fugitives at Oeniadae came back peacefully to their homes. The new allies agreed to take no part any more on either side in the great war. If any were attacked by Athenians or Peloponnesians, the rest should help in the defence. The inland of the north-west district was hence-forward not only neutral, but sealed against any warlike interference from outside. The Corinthians, however, were allowed to send a small garrison of 300 men to Ambracia city by land.[{254}] This mattered very little to Athens. She had no real interest in the interior so long as the coast was friendly. Anactorium, too, at mouth of the Ambraciot Gulf, was expressly excluded from the terms of the Alliance. The Acarnanians were to be allowed to attack it whenever they liked. A few such places still remained unfriendly to Athens' cause, but the strength of the enemy in the district was broken, and it was not again to be restored.

Demosthenes, himself, could now safely return to Athens, laden with 300 panoplies as his personal share of the spoil. "They are still preserved", adds Thucydides, "in Athenian temples." The Athenians of his composite army were allotted a third of the entire loot. In some mysterious fashion the whole of this booty was lost *en route*, with exception of the 300 panoplies.[{255}] Demosthenes' "luck" again! The dead of Aegitium were perhaps not forgotten, for Demosthenes was not elected general for the next year upon his return (if indeed he was back in time for the elections). But he was forgiven, and in a few months justified his pardon

by the most brilliant of successes at Sphacteria.

### *§ 6. The close of operations*

Two more years saw the end of the whole matter.

In 425 B.C. the Spartan Government ventured on yet another naval effort. The city of Corcyra, harried perpetually by its oligarchs, the garrison of Mount Istone, was starving. As many as 60 Peloponnesian ships sailed to Corcyra, disregarding the Athenian ships at Naupactus, which, having neither a Phormio nor a Demosthenes to inspirit them, let the enemy sail north without any hindrance. They had, however, scarcely reached the island when they were recalled to take part in the operations at Pylos and Sphacteria{256} and there to meet their fate, as will be narrated. Later in the year an Athenian squadron arrived at Corcyra. The fort was stormed and the garrison surrendered. The whole six hundred were then treacherously and foully murdered by the vindictive democrats under circumstances of great brutality. The Athenian admirals, Eurymedon and Sophocles, connived at the massacre. They themselves were in a hurry to proceed to Sicily, and did not wish anyone else to have the credit of taking the Corcyrean prisoners alive to Athens. So the waggons piled high with the corpses of the slain, laid crosswise one row on top of another, drove out of Corcyra's gate in the early morning light before the two noble Athenians' gratified eyes, and they could sail on their way with satisfaction. Thus Corcyra was completely cleared at last of any partisans of the Spartans. "There was an end of the great sedition for this war at any rate, for of the one of the two parties there was nothing whatever left worth mentioning." All that *was* left were the women of the garrison, who became the slaves of the victors.{257}

Anactorium was taken this same year. The Athenians from Naupactus and the Acarnanians came against the town, which was betrayed to them. Its Corinthian garrison was expelled and replaced by an Acarnanian.{258} Even Oeniadae next year, 424 B.C., found itself obliged by the Acarnanians to transfer its allegiance to Athens.{259} Demosthenes himself soon after was sent out again to the scene of his former triumphs. He arrived at Naupactus with 40 ships. Once again the project of a combined attack on Boeotia from three sides was to be attempted. But Demosthenes was not again to essay the perilous march through Aetolia. His part was easier, to arrive on a fixed day at Siphae, on the south coast of the threatened land. Meanwhile, he set to work to collect a large force of allies, and marched against the unlucky Salynthius, King of the Agraeans. This folk alone remained hostile of all Sparta's old friends in the north-west.

The King was won over. Demosthenes had had pleasant summer manœuvres in the interior, and with this the chapter of the “north-west” in the history of the great war ends almost upon a note of bathos.

## CHAPTER V—CLEON

### *§ 1. Cleon and Nicias*

IT was in the year 427 B.C. that “Cleon the tanner” first came prominently upon the scene of Athenian politics and holds the stage for the next six years.

He had snatched the leadership of the Assembly almost from the grasp of dying Pericles. For the old statesman’s immediate successors who sought to wield his authority were respectable mediocrities, Eucrates the “oakum-merchant”, and Lysicles, the “cattle-dealer”, who married Aspasia after Pericles’ death. Lysicles was killed in Caria, with the greater part of his force, in 428 B.C.[{260}] From this year until his own death in 422 B.C. Cleon enjoyed the greatest, though not an undisputed, influence among his fellow-citizens.

The new leader is the favourite butt of the writers of Athenian comedies, and especially of Aristophanes. The other “comic” dramatists, Eupolis, Hermippus, Plato (the poet), all lashed out at him fiercely.[{261}] “Née de la libertie démocratique elle se mit au service de l’oligarchie,” says a French writer concerning Athenian comedy,[{262}] and with reason. The plays of all the other dramatists are, one and all, lost. In comedy after comedy of Aristophanes we can still read the virulent abuse which the poet poured on Cleon’s head.[{263}] Thucydides also quite clearly disliked him. He speaks of Cleon’s “violence”, hints at his cowardice at the battle in which he “fled at once and was overtaken and slain by a Thracian targeteer”, and states roundly that he was the “greatest enemy of peace, because he fancied that in quiet times his own rogueries would be more transparent and his slanders less credible”.[{264}] This is a bitter judgment. If there is, as a critical Cambridge writer will have it, a “moral cloud which hangs over Thucydides’ treatment of Cleon”, it is shot through with lurid lightnings, and, despite Mr. Cornford, continues to discharge these on the politician’s and not on the historian’s head.[{265}] Thucydides had personal reasons for resentment with Cleon, for it was this statesman who prosecuted him on the ground of military failure in 424 B.C., and sent him into exile for twenty years.[{266}] It is refreshing to find a touch of human nature in the calm and lofty Thucydides.

Aristophanes also came early into collision with Cleon, and had some reason ruefully to acknowledge that the politician was “a dangerous foe.” A speaker, Diodotus, son of Eucrates, in the “Mitylenean debate” at Athens in 427 B.C. had roundly declared that the common people in every city of the Empire wished Athens well.[{267}] Next year the poet produced his second play, the *Babylonians*, at the March festival in Athens, which was thronged by representatives

from all parts of the Empire. The chorus of Babylonian slaves in this comedy represented the "subject-allies" of Athens, the slaves working in the State mill of the tyrant task-master, the Athenian people. This was indeed a different view of the relations between city and Empire. Cleon quite promptly denounced the poet for "insulting the people". In his play the *Acharnians*, produced a year later, Aristophanes protests that he will speak his mind still, spite of the danger:

> "Aye and I know what I myself endured
> At Cleon's hands for last year's Comedy—
> How to the Council-House he haled me off,
> And slanged, and lied, and slandered, and betongued me,
> Roaring Cycloborus-wise; till I well nigh
> Was done to death, bemiryslushified.[{268}]"

The young playwright—he was then about twenty-five years old—escaped with a fright. But for all his own boasting of his pluck he had learnt prudence enough to bring out his next four plays at the earlier February festival, when envoys from the cities of the Empire were not present.

The *Babylonians* unluckily does not survive. The comedies which followed it in rapid succession, the *Acharnians* (425), the *Knights* (424), the *Clouds* (423), the *Wasps* (422), and the *Peace* (421), showed little mercy to Cleon. Only in the *Clouds* does the poet's attack upon the politician slacken slightly, since here he was concerned with Socrates and not with politics or political institutions. Not that Cleon is the sole object of the playwright's glorious invective. But he is *facile princeps* in Aristophanes' gallery of rogues. The choicest missiles from the Aristophanic armoury of abuse come hurtling about his head. He is the demagogue who suspects and denounces plots in every quarter. Rich men, patriotic "knights", honest farmers, hapless strangers, cowering allies, all are by him calumniated and fleeced.[{269}] Bribes he swallows wholesale and retail, alike from subject allies and from enemies,[{270}] boasting all the while of his patriotism, his love for the people, his superiority to Themistocles himself.[{271}] He is a coward and a braggadocio,[{272}] a "Grab-all Grampus",[{273}] a "Cormorant",[{274}] a "Death-dealing Torrent",[{275}] a "Hydra-headed monster",[{276}] a "Cerberus",[{277}] a "Beast with jagged teeth",[{278}] a "muck-eating beetle".[{279}] He howls, he bawls, he shouts with his harsh voice, the "voice of a pig on fire".[{280}] Of all the enemies of peace, he is the most brutal, the most deadly. If the mob love him, it is because he has increased the daily fee paid to jurymen in the law courts to three obols. (Six thousand voters at one stroke!)[{281}] So he lords it, master of Council,

of Assembly, of Law Court, of every Athenian institution,[{282}] ruling the people by terror, by bribery, by superstition. He held the jurymen in the hollow of his hand.[{283}] “Like the cry of ‘Rats’ to a terrier—who said CONSPIRATORS?”[{284}] He had a whole kist-full of oracles ready for popular consumption, concerning “Athens, Pylos, you, me, and every blessed thing”.[{285}] Who could withstand his pet one:

> “Heed thou well, Erechtheides,[{286}] the oracle’s drift, which Apollo
> Out of his secret shrine through priceless tripods delivered.
> Keep thou safely the dog, the jag-toothed holy protector,
> Yapping before thy feet, and terribly roaring to guard thee.
> He thy pay will provide: if he fail to provide it he’ll perish;
> Yea, for many the daws that are hating and cawing against him.[{287}]“

The stupidest Athenian could not misinterpret that oracle.

Surely after Cleon’s death on the battlefield at head of an Athenian army the torrent of invective might cease to flow? “De mortuis nil nisi bonum”—doubtless, or at least let us pay the dead the tribute of silence if we cannot praise. Even Aristophanic comedy must feel this, and leave Cleon quiet in his lonely grave? Of course.

> “Thus the scoundrels throve and prospered”

—cries Hermes, God of the Lower World, in the *Peace* a few months after Cleon’s death—

> “whilst distracted Hellas came
> Unobserved to wrack and ruin: but the fellow most to blame
> Was a tanner—”

The Athenian Trugaeos interrupts, shocked at the bad taste of the God:

> “Softly, softly, Hermes master, say not so!
> Let the man remain in silence, whereso’er he is, below;
> For the man is ours no longer: he is all your own, you know.”

Don’t say what you might else have said, *as for example*:

> “Therefore whatso’er you call him,
> Knave and slave while yet amongst us,
> Wrangler, jangler, false accuser,
> Troubler, muddler, all-confuser,
> You will all these names be calling

One who now is yours alone."{288}

The great English democrat, William Cobbett, was quite open and unashamed when he used the death of any man whom he, on public grounds, disliked, as the opportunity for his censure. Quite frankly he admitted and defended what the rest of the world thinks a breach of good manners. The Greek playwright does his lip-service to decency, and his tongue is so manifestly in his cheek that he must be reckoned in this matter a kindred spirit with the sturdy defiant Englishman. Humour saves the reputation of the one, honesty the other's. Still—there *are* things which no gentleman will do—except after a decent interval of course. And the *Peace* was the poet's first opportunity after Cleon's death.

Aristophanic comedy in its choice of subject, method of treatment, broad jest and humour, and language, is proof not only of the taste of the people in that cultured 'age of Pericles', but also of their amazing good nature and tolerance. At these violent epithets, at this flood of abuse, hurled at their most popular statesman year after year, the people held their sides and roared with laughter. The poet won prize after prize. The statesman sate in a front seat and listened and laughed among the loudest. No Athenian politician could afford to be thin-skinned.

"Never was heard such a terrible curse!
But what gave rise to no little surprise—
Nobody seem'd one penny the worse!"

as the "Jackdaw of Rheims" has it. Socrates does complain that he suffered as a result of Aristophanes' mockery. Cleon probably never lost a vote after any of the poet's productions. {289} If his reputation has suffered since the Renaissance, that probably is all the hurt that Aristophanes has done him. The comedy's representation of Athens herself as a city "mainly of thieves and the rest fools", and that in the "good old days" of Aeschylus himself,{290} is not taken seriously. In the same measure the picture of Cleon is a travesty and a caricature. Ancient Attic comedy does not set up to be a Historical Portrait-Gallery.

The man was stormy, violent, self-confident, self-assertive (as are so many men today with less justification). Venal he certainly was. Entering public life a poor man, he left upon his death a fortune certainly of 50, possibly of 100 talents.{291} The tan-yards did not bring this in to their proprietor. In this respect the last of Athens' demagogues, Cleophon, Cleon's parody, has the advantage, for Cleophon died a poor man. Like the Roman tribunes in *Coriolanus* Cleon was "ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs." Yet, powerful and blustering orator as he

was, he would rate the people soundly when he thought them in the wrong. He was one of themselves, and they could understand him. Such a man may use plain language. They loved to see him striding up and down the orator's bench as he poured out his words, gesticulating fiercely, slapping his thigh; they loved to hear his broad jests and buffoonery. His policy was quite openly that of government of the subject allies of the Empire by terrorism. "Democracy cannot govern an Empire," he cried angrily to his fellow-citizens, and his words are famous. {292} The reason he gave is not so well remembered. "Democracy is too humanitarian, too sentimental." The Empire must pay its way, and the subjects should pay for it. Of course it was a Tyranny. Pericles had himself called it by this name. Cleon accepted it without excuse or hesitation. He was a born financier. The new schemes for active operations of war must cost money, and the Treasury was nearly empty. Athens had been living on her accumulated capital, which was nearing exhaustion.{293} Cleon was in no mood to lower wages, to pay by economy at home for the war. His "three obols" only kept pace with the increased cost of living, due to the war. There was no rise in "real" wages. He revised the tribute payments demanded of every subject ally, and so increased them that the total sum received by Athens from tribute in 425 was, perhaps, more than double the former sum. Some cities paid twice, some three times or even more of the amount hitherto demanded of them.{294} Only an occasional concession could be wrung from him by a notable man like Antiphon, orator and oligarch. Over all this side of Cleon's work Thucydides passes in complete silence. Yet upon it was built the war activity of 424 B.C.

So he breathed his own spirit of fire and energy for a year or two into the Athenian operations of war. This is Cleon's importance in the history of the war. To him war was war. It is his supreme merit as War Minister that he set out to hit the enemy hard and often. No more defensive passivity, no more offensive pin-pricks, no more half-hearted feeble advocacy of peace or negotiation with the enemy for him. To any Athenian general who failed in an enterprise he would be merciless. War was war. Cleon would break every egg in the pan: the result would be at least an omelette. A modern German attacks him fiercely. "If his personal position was endangered", writes Pöhlmann, "he would plunge Athens into any risks rather than yield the ground to his opponents."{295} It is possible that he considered his opponents the greatest risk, not only to himself, but also to his country.

Chief of these political opponents was Nicias, a rich, noble, and highly esteemed man. The greater part of his wealth was derived from silver mines. He owned one thousand miners.

These were branded slaves who worked nearly naked in chains in narrow, stifling, and black galleries, not more than 3 feet high and 3 feet broad, for at least ten hours a day, their only light that given by small clay lamps.{296} In this regard, at least, philanthropy was not his insurance office against disaster, even though, as with Mr. Pickwick, the praise of mankind was his swing. But this source of wealth could only increase the esteem in which his fellow-citizens held the pious Nicias. And his whole life was devoted to the public service. He would quote Agamemnon's saying of himself:

> "Shield of our life is pomp and circumstance:
> Yet live we but in slavery to the people."

Poor and timid speaker though he was, he was still the most popular of all candidates, the most sure of election. It was a peculiarity of the Athenian constitution that its most important annual magistrates, the ten generals, need never hold the same political views. If they formed a "Cabinet", then the Cabinet might always be a house divided against itself. Moreover, any general might be obliged to carry out instructions to which he was heartily opposed, without any thought of resignation. So Nicias, whose whole sympathy was always for peace and friendship with Sparta, found himself elected general continuously year by year in the war and entrusted with operations which he neither planned nor approved. Such coalition practices do not make for efficiency in war. But the Athenian people, however swayed by Cleon, yet loved and trusted Nicias and clave faithfully to him as they did to no other man. He enjoyed, says Thucydides, a deserved reputation for virtue.{297} Comedy, for all its license, contented itself with a few feeble and spiritless jests at his piety.{298} "Quietistic", of blameless life, "desiring to make a good end",{299} he never met with any serious disaster up to his last fatal command, and he won some quite useful successes for Athens, such as the capture of Minoa and Cythera. It was surely a cruel fate which exposed so talented and virtuous a "mediocrity"{300} to the severest of tests wherein qualities befitting a good "subaltern officer",{301} in a situation requiring a strategist and a general of quick resolution, betrayed himself, his army, and the fortunes of his city, despite all his piety, to ruin at Syracuse in 414-413 B.C. It was Pericles' chief ambition, according to Adolf Holm, to educate his fellow-Athenians up into a sounder and a more reasoned view of Nature and the Universe. If this were really the case, it must be conceded that Pericles' ambition suffered grievous shipwreck upon the worthy and pious Nicias. An "infinitely pathetic" figure, sighs the Cambridge writer.{302} But our subject (and his duty) is war, and not the tragic stage. It might even be better to call him, with the Oxford

sociologist,[{303}] an “irony of industrialism”, if the meaning of the epigram were more clear.

### *§ 2. Cleon’s rebuff: Mitylene*

The large island of Lesbos in the north-east of the Aegean Sea had been a member of the Delian Maritime Confederacy from its earliest days. At the beginning of the great war Lesbos and Chios were the only two members of the Athenian Empire which retained their independent status, possessing full rights of local self-government, and contributing ships manned by their own crews to the Imperial navy. Neither Lesbos nor Chios paid tribute. Nor had Athens been guilty of any such interference with their ally’s rights as had roused Samos to revolt against her in 440 B.C. The Lesbians had, therefore, sent two contingents of ships which assisted Pericles to suppress the Samian secession.[{304}]

It may, however, have been the punishment meted out to Samos which caused the majority of the Lesbians to reflect uneasily upon their own relations with the all-powerful Athens. Before the great war began, they had sent secretly to sound Sparta concerning the chance of help should they too revolt against Athens. But Sparta had thrown cold water upon the scheme, and the Lesbian discontent was still only simmering undetected by Athens when the war broke out. This event gave the Lesbians new reasons for revolt. The Boeotians were the islanders’ kinsmen,[{305}] and, in this war, the appeal of the kinship of blood was more than ever powerful. Moreover, now at any moment they might be summoned to share in Athens’ warfare against an enemy on whose behalf their own secret sympathy was strong. The chief city of Lesbos, Mitylene, on the southern coast of the island, resolved to revolt as soon as the preparations were complete. But the citizens needed time to strengthen their fortifications and to accumulate a store of corn in provision for a siege. More ships, too, were in building, and a special force of archers from the Black Sea was being enlisted. The crisis of decision came upon them in the summer of 428 B.C., before either corn or archers had come to them or their other preparations were finished. Information reached Athens from many quarters, from the still loyal city of Methymna in the north of the island, from the neighbouring island of Tenedos, whose inhabitants had small love for their greater neighbours, and from individual citizens elsewhere upon Lesbos who wished Athens well, some of whom were official representatives of the Athenian Government upon the island. Lesbos, these all combined to report, was on the point of revolt. They must be quick to act or they would lose the island.[{306}]

At Athens men were at first incredulous. Their own messengers proved the report true.

Hurriedly they despatched 40 ships, seizing at the same time 10 Mitylenean triremes which lay peaceably in Peiraeus harbour and casting their crews into prison. The squadron hoped to catch the Mityleneans off their guard, while these were celebrating a sacred festival outside the city walls. But warning reached the citizens in time before the coming of the fleet. They remained within the city, and defied the Athenians on their coming. So Lesbos, Methymna only excepted, revolted against Athens.{307}

It was a blow struck at Athens' very heart. The whole of her strategy was based upon her predominance at sea. The revolt of so strong an island challenged this unmistakably. Now if ever she must vindicate her claim to rule the seas.

The envoys sent to the city by the men of Mitylene were rebuffed. There were no terms possible, save unconditional submission. After some little fighting on land and sea, Mitylene was straitly blockaded by sea, and Athenian troops fortified two camps outside the walls.{308} The rebels' envoys had also reached Sparta. Bidden attend the League's General Meeting at Olympia, there they pleaded earnestly for help. Their eloquence was hardly needed. So useful a diversion and division of Athenian maritime strength must be encouraged. Lesbos was immediately received into the Peloponnesian alliance.{309}

But actual help was long in coming. The angry Athenians were the more active. In the autumn of the year the general Paches with a thousand picked hoplites arrived to reinforce the blockading squadron. Paches took command. A wall was built on the landward side of Mitylene town and garrisoned. The blockade was now complete by land and by sea. The other rebellious cities of the island, Antissa, Pyrrha, Eresus, mattered not one whit. Mitylene must be taken. Winter set in. The city began slowly to starve,{310} the citizens to despair.

Hope was rekindled in their breasts for a brief space when winter was passing away. A Spartan, Salaethus, crept by a torrent bed under the Athenians' wall and so into the beleaguered town. Help was at hand, he told the magistrates. Not only was there to be a great invasion of Attica that spring, but a squadron of 40 ships was to sail to their relief.{311} The besieged plucked up heart again.

Day followed day. The sea was open, and summer came. But no friendly sail was sighted. Alcidas delayed his coming. The invaders of Attica had come and gone from Athens' sight. They had availed Mitylene nothing.

Salaethus himself despaired. He could feed the starving folk no longer on either corn or

promises. One last chance remained, by desperate sally to break through the investing lines and reach the open country once again.

He armed the populace with sword and shield. Masters at last of a soldier's weapons, they were for the first time masters also of the city. They clustered together in small gangs at the nobles' houses. "Corn," they clamoured, "bring out your corn and share and share alike. Else we surrender the city." Let the magistrates make terms then for themselves if they could!

These magistrates chose the lesser of two evils. If they themselves yielded up the city there was a faint hope for their lives. If the mob called the Athenians in, they were doomed at once. They concluded a convention with Paches, to admit him to the city. But until envoys sent to Athens to plead their case should return, no man should suffer imprisonment, enslavement, death. The Athenian general marched in. The envoys were sent. Salaethus hid himself. A week later Alcidas reached the Ionian coast. Mitylene had fallen.{312} Paches heard presently of his coming and chased him home again. Then, returning to Lesbos, he reduced Pyrrha and Eresus (Antissa he had taken earlier), and laid hold on Salaethus in his hiding-place. The latter, and those of the Mityleneans, whom he judged most guilty, more than one thousand in number,{313} Paches despatched to Athens. Then, disbanding the greater part of his army, with the remainder he kept order on Lesbos.{314}

The scene shifts at once to Athens, and, in Athens, to the Assembly of the People. Now was come the time to avenge this last and greatest insult to their sovereign power upon the sea. Cleon at least had no qualms concerning cruelty. Upon his proposal the Athenian democracy voted for the immediate slaughter in cold blood not only of the prisoners at Athens but also of every male Mitylenean of man's age, and for the enslavement of every woman and child in the place. The opposition, led by Diodotus, son of Eucrates, was powerless against the people's wrath. That afternoon there left Peiraeus harbour a trireme carrying orders to Paches the governor to execute the sentence of Athenian vengeance. Yet its crew were anything but zealous for their mission. They rowed dully and without enthusiasm on their "untoward" business. Slowly the vessel passed out of sight round Sunium Head.{315}

The next day dawned. Remorse began to stir in Athens town. "This decision to destroy an entire city and not the guilty only was a cruel and terrible decision."{316} The desperate envoys and other partisans of the condemned urged the magistrates imploringly to call another Assembly for reconsideration of the vote. This was in fact illegal. But, in an excitable democracy, law gives place always to popular sentiment. The magistrates were much

impressed by the number of those who were making the appeal. They summoned the Assembly.

Then in it Cleon rose again. Now with bitter and sardonic irony, now with passionate reproach, he lashed the people's fickle folly, and demanded the confirmation of yesterday's sentence in all its stark barbarity. Mitylene must be made an example to the Empire.{317}

Diodotus replied coolly, without excitement, his long argument but the appeal to sheer expediency:

> "vis consili expers mole ruit sua,
> vim temperatam di quoque provehunt
> in maius."

"Temperate violence" would be satisfied with the death of the thousand already in Athens' dungeons. Why scare the people who in every city of her Empire still loved Athens well?{318}

Upon a show of hands Diodotus carried his more merciful proposal, though but by the barest of majorities—Cleon fuming in vain. It was the sorest perhaps of his rebuffs.

A second trireme left Peiraeus harbour, but this time the crew rowed furiously. The first ship had twenty-four hours' start. The distance was close on 200 miles. Would the stern chase fail? The men strained valiantly at the oars. During all that morning the envoys from Mitylene had been hurrying wine and barley meal upon the vessel as she lay at the quay side. They promised the crew huge rewards if they arrived in time. The men ate their barley cakes, kneaded with oil and wine, as they rowed. When one company tired, a fresh relay, springing up from sleep, was ready to take their place. The rowing never ceased. "By chance", writes Thucydides, "no contrary wind sprang up." The ship drew near to Mitylene harbour. The sea was empty. No sail was seen before them on their course. As they rowed desperately in, there they saw the other vessel lying quietly moored to the quay. Yet there was no clamour in the town. She had only just arrived. Paches had received his orders, and, sorrowfully, was about to obey. "So near came Mitylene to destruction."{319} Only a few more than one thousand victims were put to death, so powerful was the revulsion of feeling at Athens, so great the "repentance" and the mercy of the Athenian people.{320}

Grote holds that Cleon himself was fortunate in his rebuff:

Had the execution been realized, the person who would have suffered most by it, and most deservedly, would have been the proposer Kleôn.

So violent would the reaction of Athenian sentiment have been had the wicked deed been so irrevocably done:

> "Kleôn would have been held responsible as the author of that which had so disgraced them in their own eyes."{321}

It cannot be said, however, that Cleon himself showed the least sign of thankfulness for his "escape"{322} or of repentance for his "barbaric proposal".{323} Another English historian in fact suggests that he showed his anger by taking vengeance on the unlucky Paches. He would in fact "learn" the governor to be so dilatory in carrying out his orders.{324}

For Paches had been recalled to Athens "to give account of his generalship", and, being condemned, drew his sword and slew himself on the spot in court.{325} But Cleon is never named as his accuser. And a romantic poet (at least one thousand years later) gave a different version of the governor's misdeeds. Two fair wives of Mitylene, Hellanis and Lamaxis, won his amorous regard. He slew their husbands to win possession of the wives. But they escaped overseas to Athens and denounced the "accursed Paches" and his villainy to the ears of the sympathetic people. So did Hellanis and Lamaxis drive him to his direful fate, and, returning home, died, and were laid to rest in their murdered husbands' tombs. "Wherefore do all men still sing of the heroines' fame." The German is a little sceptical concerning this "emotion", this "intensity of anger" on part of the Athenian people on behalf of the Wives of Lesbos, with which the generous Englishman credits his dearly loved democracy of Athens. This people had but recently condemned the women to slavery, he remarks. But we may be allowed, in Cleon's if not in Paches' interests, to forget the awkward gap of a thousand years between the fact and its story, and to admire the poem.{326}

The Lesbians were well rid of Paches. But they lost their ships and great part of their lands as well. No tribute was imposed on the island, and this is the more remarkable in that now in 427 B.C. the financial strain of the war was becoming serious. But the confiscated territory was divided up into 3000 "lots", of which 300 were bestowed "on the Gods"—Apollo was a rich landowner—and the remainder were assigned to 2700 poor citizens of Athens, who were despatched as "cleruchs"—"lot-holders"—to live upon the island while still retaining their status as citizens. This special Athenian type of over-seas State-aided colonisation had been a feature of the pre-war administration of Pericles and was highly popular in the city. The sending of the cleruchs to Lesbos has been recently thought to have been a master-device of

Cleon, whereby, “playing his trump-card of a cleruchy to Mitylene”, he regained command of the game of politics. This is very doubtful. Cleon might well have preferred cash down in the shape of tribute to the loss of 2700 votes in the Athenian Assembly. For the 2700 did sail to the island, Thucydides himself asserts, and some doubts expressed on the point have little warrant. Only, the new settlers were unique in this, that they did not themselves farm their new small holdings, but allowed the native owners to remain as tenants. Each of these paid his settler-landlord gladly 2 minae (nearly £8) a year as rent and remained on his old farm. The settlers drew their money and enjoyed a lazy life in the town. It was a monstrous abuse of the whole “cleruchic system”, except in so far as the new-comers may have been called on to discharge its secondary (and less popular) object, that of acting as a garrison in the middle of a conquered and disaffected people. Henceforth the 2700 disappear from view. It is probable that they drifted back to Athens sooner or later, perhaps sooner. All that is clear is that the Athenian State itself derived not one single obol from the ninety talents which the Lesbians paid annually to save themselves from eviction from the farms. And this does *not* look like Cleon’s work in the least.{327}

So the great challenge to Athens’ sea-power failed. Lesbos lay sullenly quiet. But when the first chance of revolt came again, fifteen years later, the islanders seized it with avidity.{328}

In the elections of generals for 426 B.C. the “War Party” swept the country. Hardly one of the generals of the preceding year secured re-election. Nicias, of course, remained indispensable. It was “an unparalleled overthrow of the ruling party”, in Beloch’s words.{329}

“O generals, great in number, small in worth!” wails the peace-loving Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* in February 425 B.C.{330} Cleon is not among them. He had no military tastes or reputation. His *forte* was oratory, and it is quite unnecessary to invent a special financial office for him in this or any other year.{331}

But Demosthenes now for the first time becomes general, and proceeds to Aetolia. The events of the year reflected little credit, as has been seen, either on him or on Nicias.{332} The latter, however, retained his command for the year 425 B.C., the year of Cleon’s triumph.

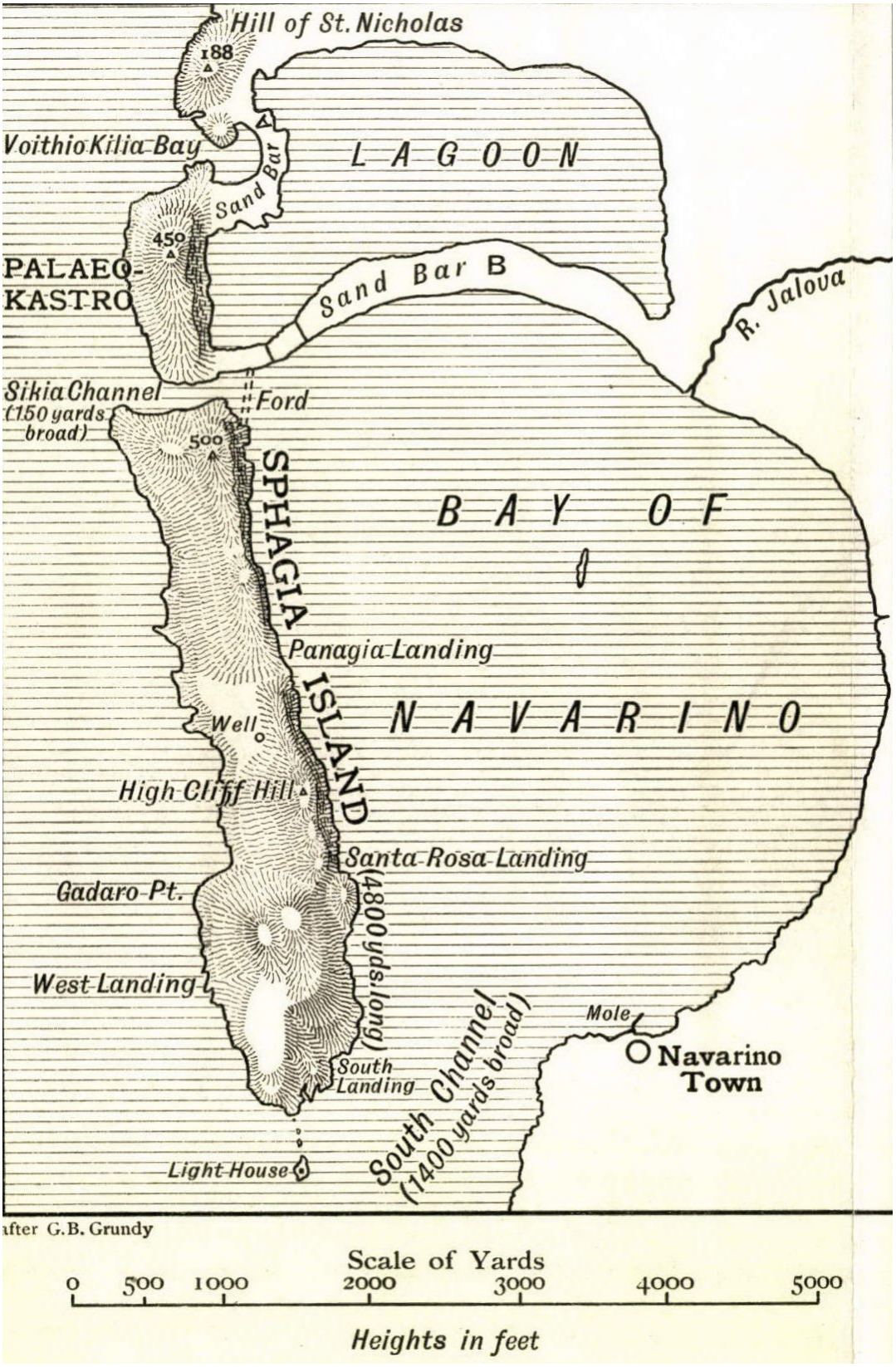
### *§ 3. Demosthenes at Pylos*{333}

In the spring of the year 425 B.C. when the corn was still green in the ear, Agis, the new Spartan king (he had succeeded his father, Archidamus, two years before), invaded Attica and ravaged the country. About the time of his coming, the Athenians despatched a squadron of 40

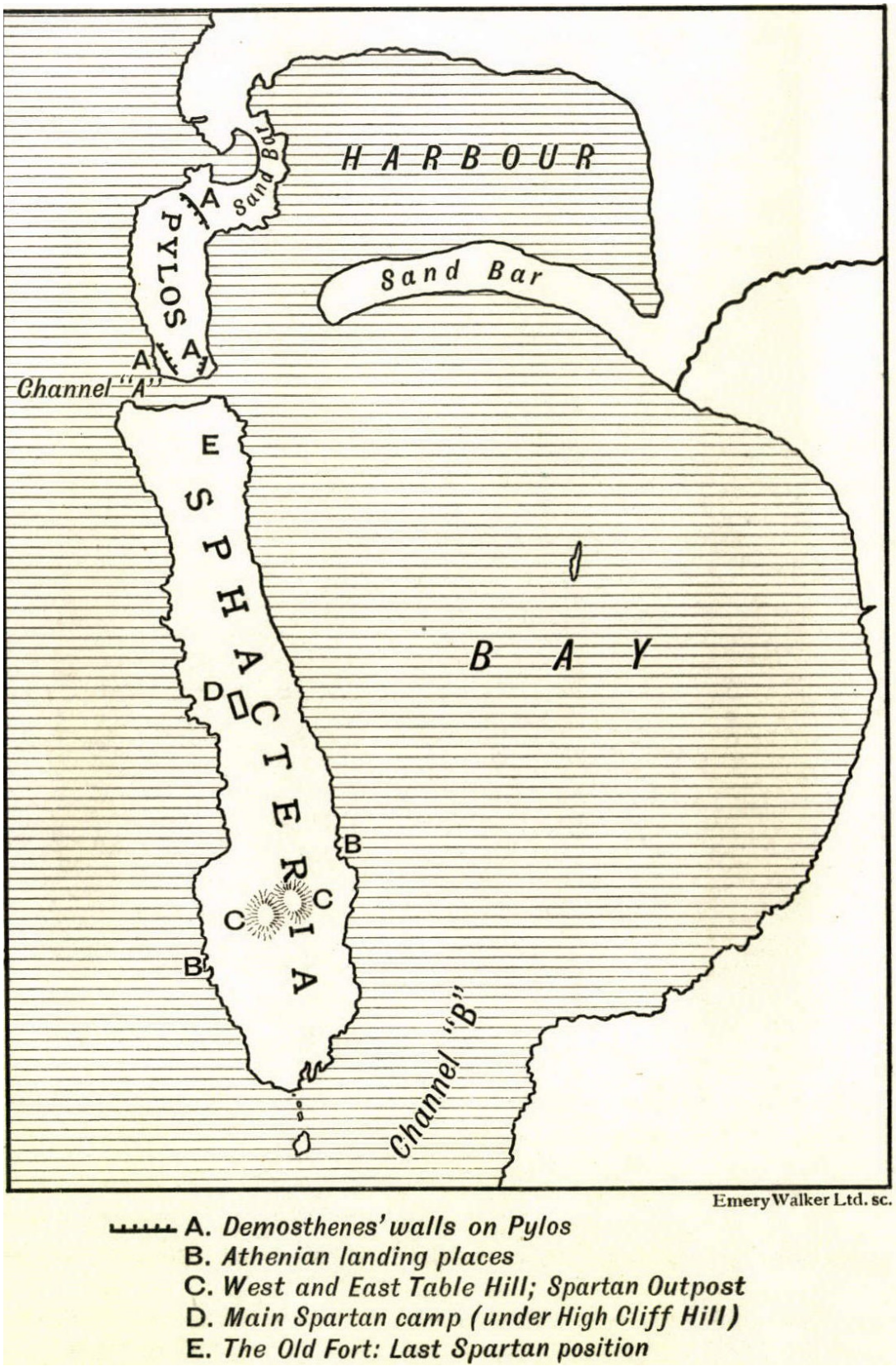
ships from Peiraeus harbour under command of Eurymedon and Sophocles, with orders to sail round the Peloponnese and make their way first to Corcyra and then to Sicily. Corcyra city was in sore straits of hunger, being harried continually by the oligarchic exiles on Mount Istone.{334} It needed succour. To Sicily a squadron of 20 ships had been already sent in 427 B.C. under Laches.{335} Interference in the affairs of the island had been an item in "radical" policy perhaps ever since Themistocles' day. Pericles in 433 B.C. had cemented Athens' alliances with her island friends and with Rhegium on the Italian side of Messina Straits. But the 20 ships under Laches had achieved extremely little, and that commander had been superseded in the preceding winter of 426 B.C. by Pythodorus, who had already arrived at Rhegium with a few ships as earnest of the larger fleet to come.{336} So Eurymedon and Sophocles set sail with their 40 ships, bound first for Corcyra and then for Sicily. On shipboard with them was Demosthenes, lately returned to Athens from Naupactus. He held no command, but had received special permission "to employ the ships round Peloponnese as he wished".{337} The fortunes of Demosthenes and the fleet were such that both Corcyra and Sicily receded into the background. And an overwhelming cloud of controversy and argument has settled down over Thucydides' story of the greatest success gained by the Athenians in the war, a success which resulted from the sailing of these ships.

**PYLOS AND SPHACTERIA**

**STATE**



**SUPPOSED STATE B.C. 425**




When the squadron arrived off the Laconian coast news reached the admirals that an enemy navy of 60 ships had already arrived at Corcyra. The need for haste seemed imperative.

Disparity of numbers mattered nothing. Corcyra must be saved. Incidentally, the enemy fleet must be fought and destroyed if it could be caught. Perhaps this was the more important strategical object of the two, if a choice were necessary.{338} Demosthenes' roving commission seemed of small urgency compared with the primary duty of speed on the voyage northwards.

That soldier, however, was of a different mind. There is hardly a reasonable doubt that before his return to Athens he had concerted with his Messenian friends at Naupactus the plan which he laid before Eurymedon and Sophocles as soon as the fleet arrived off Navarino Bay.{339} Here, on the west coast of Messenia, just to the north of Sphacteria Island, which lay off and was protector of that bay, and separated from the island by the narrow Sikia Channel, there was a rocky headland, Pylos or Coryphasion by name. Let them land here, Demosthenes urged his colleagues. He had a special reason, he said, for this request. Eurymedon and Sophocles impatiently rejected the idea. But then "fortune" intervened.{340} A storm drove the ships to take refuge in the bay.

Instantly Demosthenes came again to the others. Let them fortify Pylos, he begged them. This was the very reason, so he assured them, for which he had accompanied the fleet. The surrounding country was lonely. Sparta was nearly 50 miles away. There was plenty of material handy for the building of such walls as would make a naturally strong place impregnable to attack, and there was also time for their building before the enemy arrived.

Eurymedon and Sophocles were scornful. There were plenty of other desolate headlands round Peloponnese, said they, which Demosthenes might occupy if he had this passion for squandering public money. In vain he urged the superior charms of Pylos, a good harbour, just the place to plant a Messenian garrison in their own old homeland, thence to ravage what had become a hostile territory. From the admirals he turned dolefully first to the soldiers of the fleet, then to the subordinate officers. All turned the deafest of deaf ears to his entreaties. Demosthenes' sense of military discipline, a curious one, was properly rebuked. But the storm continued to rage, and now the soldiers themselves grew tired of idling on shore doing nothing. Why not start building after all? A sudden enthusiasm seized them. They had neither entrenching tools nor hods for carrying mortar. But of rough stones and timber there was plenty. Stone was fitted in with stone. Mortar was carried on the back, the men stooping forward and clasping their hands behind them. The storm blew. The men laboured. In six days they turned Pylos into the strongest of improvised fortresses. On the east, the landward side, an "unclimbable cliff" fell sheer from a height of 450 feet into the waters of the present lagoon

(which *may* then have been connected with the Bay of Navarino.[{341}]) All that was needed was a short wall at the south-east end of the promontory, where this sloped more gradually to the Sikia Channel, and also perhaps a second one at its northern extremity, looking towards the sand-bar south of Voithio Kilia Bay. Some kind of low fortifications were also thrown up on the sea side on the south west of the promontory.[{342}] The walls were built. Demosthenes was given five of the 40 ships and a handful of men by way of garrison. With the 35 ships Eurymedon and Sophocles pressed on northwards and left Demosthenes and his men alone on the rocky headland.

Their haste, if they were hastening,[{343}] was curiously slow. Quite a week at least must have passed before they received an urgent message from the general imploring them to come to his aid. The message found them as near to Pylos as Zacynthus, only 70 miles away. Perhaps it was the gale still blowing, that "fierce north wind which is the dangerous wind on this coast during the summer season",[{344}] which made their voyage slow and laborious. Perhaps—and it is an attractive suggestion[{345}]—Demosthenes had been left at Pylos as a bait, to lure the hostile fleet southwards from Corcyra that the Athenians might intercept and destroy it on its way. Hence Eurymedon and Sophocles stayed in the not-distant offing at Zacynthus. If this were in truth the reason of their very sober "haste", the admirals earn great praise for their strategical insight.

Meanwhile Demosthenes soon found himself in sore straits. News of the Athenian landing had sped at once to Sparta. There the Government was annoyed rather than alarmed. It would be surely the easiest of matters to capture the new fort, if indeed the impudent small enemy force did not sail away in terror at first sign of an advancing army. There was a festival in progress, and no immediate need to mar it. But King Agis in distant Attica took a far more serious view of the incident, when the tidings reached him as well. At once he broke off his ravaging of Attica and marched for home, being the more readily disposed for this as the weather was unduly wet and his army was hungry, there being no grain ready for reaping. So this was the briefest of all the invasions of Attica and lasted but for fifteen days.

On his return the Spartan army marched at once on Pylos. The rest of the Peloponnesians were called to muster and follow at once. And a message was sent to the squadron at Corcyra to sail without delay to the spot. By land and by sea immediate peril threatened Demosthenes on Pylos. Before the hostile fleet arrived, he sent off two of his five ships to Zacynthus, begging Eurymedon and Sophocles to return. It is always well to duplicate an urgent message,

and a large hostile fleet was known to be approaching from the north.

That fleet arrived, with Thrasymelidas the Spartan as its commander and Brasidas as captain of one of its 43 ships. It had been ported over the isthmus of Leucas, escaped the observation of the Athenian fleet at Zacynthus, and came sailing proudly into Navarino Bay. There on the land was the Spartan army, also ready to assault the new built fortifications of Pylos.

Demosthenes for his part had not been idle. Two Messenian boats had arrived, bringing a spare stock of arms and forty hoplites. It is hardly the custom of a thirty-oared galley and a cutter to carry spare weapons. Their arrival had been far too timely to be matter of mere chance. The Messenians at Naupactus had been on the outlook for Demosthenes, and his "mudlarks"[{346}] at Pylos were according to plan. Only Thucydides never tells us this himself. Pylos must be attacked at once. The Athenian squadron might perhaps return. But the Spartans in command both on sea and land were fairly confident that the fort, which was scantily garrisoned and inadequately provisioned, could not offer any prolonged resistance. They made their dispositions for an immediate onslaught both by land and sea. By land the position could be assailed only where Demosthenes had built his walls. By sea there was but one landing possible, on the rocky sloping shore on the sea side of the promontory at its southern end just north of the Sikia Channel. Demosthenes duly distributed his available forces in defence. The major part was set to guard the landward wall or walls. He, himself, with but sixty men lined the shore where the foe might try and force a landing. The reefs off shore would in any case make this a hazardous attempt, and there was no room for more than a few of the many enemy's ships to make the landfall together at one time.

Before the attack was delivered the Spartans took a step by way of precaution which was to prove the sole cause of their eventual undoing. They threw a garrison into Sphacteria Island.

This island, the modern Sphagia, lies athwart the Bay of Navarino like Drake's Island off Plymouth Sound. It is 4800 yards in length and at its north-east extremity attains a height of 500 feet. It is separated from Pylos, the modern Palaeo-Kastro, to the north by a narrow channel, the Sikia Channel, 132 yards broad at its narrowest.[{347}] Its southern end is separated from the mainland by a strait 1400 yards in breadth. The island, "terrible ground to traverse",[{348}] is still covered with the low scrub which was its feature when, uninhabited and pathless, it was occupied by a Spartan garrison on the occasion of the siege of Pylos in 425 B.C.

The primary object of this manœuvre was to prevent the Athenians using Sphacteria in course of the struggle. The Spartans also entertained the idea of “blocking” both channels. Now “blocking” means a moored line of triremes, beaks outward, fastened together,{349} and almost certainly anchored. Had this been possible, any hostile fleet arriving off the bay would have found no access into its comparatively sheltered waters and must have retired baffled before the continuous hostile line—ships in the channels and troops on the island. In actual fact, the southern channel was far too broad, and the depth of water far too great, to make the “blocking-idea” one moment feasible.{350} Soundings showed this at once. Anchorage was impossible. But the rumour of the plan had gone abroad in the camp and is duly reproduced in Thucydides’ narrative. In fair weather a cordon of ships could guard the southern entrance. Other than this, there could be no “blocking”.

The Spartan admiral Thrasymelidas with his ships sailed out of the bay and approached Pylos from the sea side. In small detachments (for the practicable space was narrow) the ships approached the rocky shore on the south-west of the promontory and strove to force a landing. Simultaneously the land army assaulted the garrison’s rude walls on the landward side. The fight raged furiously for the whole of that day and part of the next. The irony of the situation tickled Thucydides. Here were Spartans—soldiers—at sea trying to land on their own coast, and Athenians—sailors—on land defending a hostile shore. The latter fought stoutly and well, and repulsed all attacks. Brasidas displayed for his part his wonted heroism. In an ecstasy of indignation he compelled the over-cautious pilot of his ship to run it hard up on the rocks at the landing-beach. Not this the time to be thrifty of timber, he shouted, when the foe had built a fort in their country. But as his vessel ran hard up aground and the gangway was flung ashore, a rain of missiles fell upon him as he strode to its head. Wounded in many places, he fell fainting backwards into the forepeak, and his shield, slipping off his arm into the sea, was washed ashore and used afterwards for the Athenian trophy of victory. All other efforts to land were beaten off. The fight died down after noon on the second day. The Spartans drew off both by land and sea, moving their 43 ships into Navarino Bay again and their large army to its cantonments on the mainland shore. Siege-engines, they determined, were required to carry these stubborn walls. They sent to fetch timber for their building from Asine, 30 miles away. So on the third day all rested. The ships floated quietly on the calm waters of the bay, watching its entrances north and south of Sphacteria Island. The garrison, which was landed that morning as usual on the Island, looked across the Sikia Channel northwards upon the Athenian fort still proudly defiant, or gazed seawards, perhaps not without anxiety, over an empty sea. They

numbered some 420 heavy-armed men, of whom perhaps 175 or 200 were pure “Spartiates”, together with some (probably few) attendant helots. Their commander was a Spartan, Epitadas by name.

Then the Athenian squadron arrived. Eurymedon and Sophocles had added ships of Chios and Naupactus to their own, and raised their strength to fifty. Starting at dawn and making all possible speed, they may have traversed the 70 miles from Zacynthus to Pylos in the day. Certainly there was no intermediate port of call for them, and night voyaging was unlikely. They cannot have arrived before evening. The men were tired. The shore, both of the mainland and of Sphacteria Island, was bristling with enemy troops. The enemy squadron lay in the bay. There was no room to bring the 50 ships to land at Pylos itself, under protection of Demosthenes and his garrison. The watching foe saw the newcomers hesitate off the entrance to the bay, then row northwards again and disappear from sight. With relief the Peloponnesians withdrew to their night rest. Their ships as usual were dragged up on the sand, either in the Inner Harbour, if that then existed (which is doubtful),[{351}] or on the sand bar and shore on the north of the bay itself.

The next day dawned. It was just possible, the Spartan commander considered, that the enemy would return. There was time enough. The crews began to drag the ships again down into the water. Most were just afloat and the men on board when there rushed in upon them by both entrances the whole Athenian navy. Its admirals, the evening before, had but retired to shelter under the lee of a small uninhabited island eight miles to the north, Prote Island by name. So, with men reinvigorated and bent on fighting, they returned, to catch the foe unready and off their guard. The “ruse”,[{352}] if ruse it were and not mere Spartan sluggishness and carelessness, was a wonderful triumph for Eurymedon and Sophocles. No Spartan excuses later could explain away or minimise the disaster.

Down upon the enemy’s disorganised fleet came the Athenians rowing fiercely. Five ships were taken; the rest were chased back to the sand. Here at the water’s edge there was furious fighting, and many a tug of war with the Athenian sailors striving to tow the hulks away, the Peloponnesian troops wading into the water and pulling them might and main back to land again. Once again Thucydides is struck by the humour of the situation, the *bouleversement* of the ordinary. “The Athenians were fighting a land battle from the ships, the Lacedemonians a sea-fight from the land.”[{353}] “Commutata forma dimicandi”.[{354}] It is not one of the historian’s happiest interjections.

In the end the Athenians had to rest content with the five ships captured at their first onset. But they remained in complete possession of the bay. The garrison on Sphacteria Island was hopelessly cut off, and the rest of the Peloponnesian army which now arrived upon the scene could only look on as helplessly from the land as did their Spartan comrades in arms. Their useless ships stayed where they were, pulled up high and dry on shore. The enemy vessels sailed gaily round and round the island.

In the deepest dismay the Spartan magistrates themselves hastened from the city to the scene of the disaster. There was nothing to be done save to arrange for an armistice on the spot and open immediate negotiations with the Athenian people. Sparta could not sacrifice the handful of her own noble troops upon Sphacteria. And there was little food for them upon the island. They must at least soon be starved into surrender or perish there of hunger. The Athenian commanders granted a truce for the purpose of the mission to Athens. All hostilities were to cease until the envoys returned. An Athenian trireme was to take these and bring them back. Meanwhile daily rations should be allowed to the men on the island, two quarts of barley meal, a pint of wine, and a bit of meat for each soldier, each man's servants to have the half. In return it was stipulated that all the Peloponnesian ships of war, both those on the spot and all others in any Laconian harbours, were to be handed over to the Athenians. "When the envoys return", so ran the terms agreed upon, "the truce is to be at an end, and the Athenians are to give back the ships in the same condition in which they received them." The least infraction of the agreement on either side, it was agreed, was *ipso facto* to end the truce.

The Spartans sent to collect the ships and eventually handed over a total number of about sixty. The rations were sent into the island, and Epitadas there presently began out of them to make some accumulation of his scanty supplies. The envoys sailed to Athens. For three weeks the forces on both sides at Navarino Bay lay quietly waiting to hear what had happened at Athens.[{355}]

### *§ 4. Cleon's triumph: Sphacteria*[{356}]

At Athens the Spartan envoys, in a speech full of platitudes and anything but laconic (they apologising for their verbosity), offered peace, friendship, alliance. They mistook the temper of the Athenian people in this its hour of unexpected success. Cleon baffled them. At his persuasion the Athenians in open Assembly demanded as the price of peace four places which they had dolefully surrendered at the Peace of 445 B.C. These were Nisaea and Pagae (the

harbours of Megara) which concerned them greatly, together with Troezen and Achaea, which were of smaller importance. The demands were impossible, and Cleon knew it. The places were not at once in Sparta's gift to bestow. But all bargains in Greece, as in any small Italian town today, pursued the same course. Each side stated unreasonable terms, and a process of haggling ensued to lead to an accepted compromise. Not unnaturally the Spartans requested further discussion in a small joint committee. They could not openly make offers affecting the interests of their allies, offers which might come to nothing, without gravely imperilling their own credit with those allies. Such negotiations needed delicate handling. But the request gave Cleon his opportunity. Thundering furiously in the Assembly, he denounced this insidious attempt to go behind the backs of the people. How alien from the vital principle of democracy was such secret diplomacy with all its treacherous distrust of popular rights.[{357}] In fact, he and the Athenians as a whole were shrewd enough to realise that actually to capture the garrison on Sphacteria first was the best asset for any bargaining. And they were confident that the prize was within their grasp.

The German writer Holm suggests that the Spartan proposal for a small committee was intended merely to waste time until winter should come on and compel the Athenians to raise the blockade of the island. Cleon, therefore, acted "perfectly rightly". But this same writer asserts in the same breath that "it was easy at any time to make a Psyttaleia of Sphacteria", *i.e.* to massacre the garrison on Sphacteria as the Greeks slew the Persians on Psyttaleia Island after their victory at Salamis. There cannot be any doubt that the Spartans were honestly eager to conclude peace at once before any such risk were run. Cleon did not want immediate peace. The Spartan envoys saw that the Athenians were resolute to press their advantage home and would not grant any tolerable terms. They returned to Pylos, and the truce there came at once to an end.[{358}]

Thereupon the Spartan commanders at Pylos claimed the return of their 60 ships in accordance with the terms of the armistice. The Athenians refused to give them up. Surely the ship which carried the envoys back brought also instructions or suggestions from Cleon to this effect. The demagogue was never a man to be greatly influenced by scruples of honour. Never was there so glorious an opportunity for the capture of great part of the Peloponnesian navy without a blow. The masterly device succeeded admirably. The admirals raked up a frivolous pretext or two, accusing the Spartans of some petty attack upon their fort at Pylos during the armistice and of "some other trivial infractions of the treaty which seemed hardly worth

mentioning".{359} When cannot some frontier "incident" be engineered to allow a Greek army today to invade Bulgaria? Thucydides does not trouble to gloze over his countrymen's dishonourable ill faith. It is left for a German historian to maintain that the Athenians were "formally justified".{360} The Spartans protested hotly but in vain against the wrong. They lost their ships. The enemy's fleet ceased to be a "fleet in being". Athens was finally for a dozen years rid of any apprehension of any interference with her naval activities or projects in western seas. It was an end of the "naval war" for many a long year, unless the Syracusans could put up a skirmish or two in Messina Straits.{361} Yet no allusion is made on either side in after years to this incident. The Spartans were doubtless a trifle ashamed of their *sancta simplicitas*. Such trickery in Greek warfare occasioned no surprise. It may be also that the Spartan Government was not wholly sorry to be rid once and for all of the embarrassing problem how to employ an inferior fleet and justify the expenditure in which such employment involved them.

A great land power not dependent upon overseas supplies could regard the loss of its inferior fleet with some equanimity and continue the war unperturbed until disaster befel its army.

It remained for the Athenians on the spot to catch the hare before they cooked it. Things began to go surprisingly awry. The blockade of Sphacteria indeed was strict enough to prevent any attempt on part of the garrison to escape. During each day two triremes rowed continually in opposite directions round the island, and at night the whole Athenian fleet, now reinforced to over 70 vessels, lay at stations off it unless windy weather confined them to the bay. But the garrison showed no sign of surrender, and the Athenian hopes of enforcing this by hunger sank day by day. Water there was on the island at the well in its centre, where the Spartans pitched their main camp. And food reached them in small but sufficient quantities. For the Home Government proclaimed large rewards, and liberty as well for a helot, to any man who would convey supplies of meal, cheese, and wine to the besieged. Many a small boat made the attempt. In calm weather all were captured. But on any stormy night, when the blockading squadron had been forced to run into the bay for shelter, boat after boat came recklessly driving before the wind upon the seaward shore of the island just before dawn. Their crews ran them ashore wherever there might seem any practicable landing north of Gadaro Point, and the Spartans waited there to drag the craft to safety. Or strong swimmers crossed the sheltered water of the bay from the mainland, towing after them skins full of linseed and poppy seed

cakes kneaded with honey. It was but a few hundred yards to swim at the nearest point. Sentries could hinder but could not prevent such enterprise. So, one way and another, many brave men earned their rewards, especially the helots. There was found still a store of food upon the island when the end came. But this end seemed to the anxious Athenians, both those on the spot and those in the city, very sorely delayed. Meanwhile the former were themselves enduring great distresses. Still the enemy's army threatened the fort at Pylos on the landward side. Inside the fort they had but one small well and were compelled to obtain some brackish water by scraping away the shingle on the shore. Cramped also within this narrow space, the crews had to land to take their uncomfortable meals on shore by relays. Food itself was scanty and difficult to bring from home. The voyage round the Peloponnese was long and dangerous. The perpetual watch was an ever-increasing strain. Week followed week, but success seemed no nearer. The blockade-runners never ceased their efforts. Presently the besieged might have boats enough to seize the chance of a rough night and steal over to the mainland. In any case, autumn was drawing on apace, when the blockading squadron must of dire compulsion of weather abandon the whole enterprise and return to Athens. The prize was slipping through their fingers.

So men began to look gloomily at one another in the streets of Athens. Angry glances were darted at Cleon who had hindered any bargaining with the Spartan envoys. The people must be called together to discuss the situation. The Assembly met. Their own messengers from Pylos made their melancholy report. Cleon sprang up. The men were lying, he shouted. "Go and see for yourself," they retorted. He found himself with one other chosen at once as Commissioners to visit the island and report. This would never do. The lies would be found his, not theirs.

"Commissions only waste time," he cried. "If you believe this story, why not act at once upon it? Send more ships directly." He pointed straight at Nicias, the general, his enemy.

"If our generals were men", he cried tauntingly, "it would be easy enough to sail and capture the men on the island. I, myself, at any rate would do it, if *I* were in command."

Some clamour at once arose.

"Go and sail then, now directly, if it seems so easy to you," men shouted at him. Nicias, greatly angered by the other's taunts, seized the opportunity.

"Bold words!" he cried scornfully. "Suppose for a change you *do* something worth doing. Take any force you like, so far as we generals are concerned, and have a try."

“I am quite ready,” retorted Cleon, thinking Nicias was jesting. But when he saw that the general meant his offer seriously, Cleon drew back disconcerted. He had never yet commanded troops in the field, and as yet he had no particular taste for soldiering. For once panic gripped him. Surely Nicias would never have the effrontery to yield up his own command to him.

“*I* am not general,” he growled, “*you* are.”

Nicias rose again.

“I resign my Pylos command,” he cried. “I call you all to witness, men of Athens! Take it then, Cleon.”

Loud shouts greeted his offer. The Assembly was seized with that infectious frenzy to which a mob is so liable. The more Cleon tried to eat his words, the more loudly the people shouted, “as a crowd is wont to do”, remarks Thucydides disdainfully.

“Give up your command!” they howled to Nicias. “Sail, sail!” to Cleon.

Incensed and at bay, Cleon defiantly accepted the inevitable.

“*I* am not scared of Spartans,” he cried. “Sail I will, and with no single citizen to help me. Give me the men of Lemnos and Imbros now in the city, the targeteers who have come from Aenos to help us, and another four hundred bowmen. “With these and the soldiers already on the spot I tell you that within twenty days I will either bring you these Spartans alive or slay them where they are.”

Laughter rang out in the Assembly at his vaunting. Within twenty days! And Cleon! Three good sound generals had been trying without success for close on six weeks. What a mad promise!

“Yet”, says Thucydides, “sober-minded folk were delighted. ‘We shall get at least one or other of two good things,’ they reflected. ‘Either we shall be rid of Cleon, or he will get the Spartans for us.’” And these good sober citizens expected, possibly hoped, that they would be rid of Cleon.

They were, agreeably or disagreeably, disappointed. Cleon was a shrewd fellow. He knew precisely the kind of troops wanted for fighting on rough ground. He knew also, from information already received, that Demosthenes was on the point of attacking the Spartans on his own account, and that the troops on the spot, sick of their miseries and inaction, feeling themselves “besieged rather than besiegers”, were themselves eager to finish the affair. He

made the Assembly on the spot vote him Demosthenes as his colleague for the enterprise, and sailed with his reinforcements immediately, sending word of his coming to the general. He arrived on the heels of his messenger and promptly handed over the entire conduct of the military operations to his comrade. Just before Cleon's arrival, luck had once again, and once again undeniably, served Demosthenes well. He had been nervous of forest fighting and its blind ways ever since his disaster in Aetolia. Sphacteria was thickly covered with high bush, and he was also without any sure information concerning the numbers of its garrison.[{362}] The Athenian sailors, however, had recently taken to landing on the island shore itself instead of on Pylos to take their midday meal, throwing out an outpost line of sentries. It befel that a man accidentally set the scrub alight. A timely wind sprang up. The fire raged through the island, and the Spartans' cover was to a great extent destroyed. Thereby, too, their numbers were disclosed. All was ready for the daring feat of attack by land when Cleon arrived with his own useful troops to give the soldier his encouragement and final impulse.

So on the second night after Cleon's coming, a little before dawn,[{363}] Demosthenes landed 800 hoplites, the advance guard of his whole enormous army. The troops were disembarked on both sides of the island, the sea and bay being calm, part on the beach south of Gadaro Point, part at the Santa Rosa landing on the east side. The main Spartan force under Epitadas himself lay at the well under High Cliff Hill in the centre of the island, with a small outpost of thirty men to the south of it on East or West Table Hill. A third detachment was posted at the extreme north of the island at its topmost height on the cliff opposite Pylos, where was an ancient rude stone fort of a sort. Owing to the lie of the land, both places where the Athenians disembarked were out of sight. The garrison were all unconscious of the peril, and the landing was unopposed. The small outpost on Table Hill was rushed at once from both sides, caught half asleep, and cut down to a man. Under cover of this success, with the coming of daylight, the main Athenian army was landed. Its strength was over whelming. Perhaps as many as 15,000 men in all, certainly more than 10,000 were disembarked.

Epitadas at first drew up his battle array, less than 400 men, opposite the 800 Athenian hoplites. But swarms of light-armed foemen harassed him on either side, and spread along the line of cliffs above his left flank. Arrows, javelins, and stones rained furiously upon the small Spartan army. If it advanced, the clouds of skirmishers retreated, but their missiles kept the Spartans from closing with the enemy hoplites, who for their part stood quiet and made no attempt to advance against the opposing hoplites. The garrison fought stubbornly, but hour after

hour passed, and wounds, weariness, thirst, and the heat of the blazing sun of that summer day drained away their strength. Thick parching clouds of dust rose from the burnt and trampled undergrowth. The confidence of the assailants grew. On landing they were “in slavish fear of a Spartan foe”. Now, as a pack of yelping hounds, they saw the lion, within whose reach they dared not venture,[{364}] wounded and slowly dying. Their shouts drowned the Spartan generals’ words of command. At last, but still with closed ranks and in perfect order, the remnant of the garrison fell back step by step, until they reached their last station, the fort at the north of the island. Just under the crest of this, the summit hill, they halted for the last stand, spreading round it in a semicircle. Here on the higher ground they had their flanks protected, and the assailants were baffled. Still there was no sign of the end. As at Thermopylae in old days, a few unconquerable Spartans defied the masses of the enemy. And, as at Thermopylae, the enemy found at last a way round an else impregnable position.[{365}] A body of light-armed men, under guidance of a Messenian captain who knew the ground, clambered one by one from the north shore up the steep cliff and seized the tumbled mass of untidy rocks which formed the actual summit in the immediate rear of the thin Spartan line. With thousands of the foe pressing upon their front, the Spartans had neither men nor time to dislodge the band of foemen above them in the rocks. Their assailants in front, cheered by the appearance of the company on the kopje, renewed their attacks more fiercely. Fainting with wounds, hunger, and thirst, entrapped, ringed round, slowly yielding ground, still the defenders made no sign of surrender. One last combined assault, however, and not a man would have survived.

This was not the finish desired by Demosthenes or by Cleon, who had landed to take his part as onlooker by his brother general’s side. Dying, these Spartans had but left their heroism as a memory to their city and nerved it to a still more bitter struggle in vengeance for its dead. Living and prisoners, the captured were of supreme value for any future bargaining for peace. The Athenian generals called off their men and sent bidding the Spartans surrender at discretion.

Epitadas had been killed already. The second-in-command, Hippagretas, lay among the slain for dead. Only 292 men remained with Styphon as their general, of whom some 120 were Spartans. They had fought with matchless heroism. All that was left to them was massacre, were the attack renewed. Who can blame those who laid down their shields and waved their readiness to surrender?

But Styphon and the stouter-hearted made stipulations first. They asked permission to

consult their comrades on the mainland. The Athenian generals assented. Heralds, and more than once, passed to and fro between mainland and island. Then came the last despairing message to the garrison from the army.

"The Lacedemonians bid you decide for yourselves. Do nothing dishonourable."{366}

Styphon and his men talked together for a while. Then all surrendered. Such is the tale of "that magnificent struggle, one of the most glorious feats of Spartan courage, discipline, and endurance, which, beginning on the low ground in the centre of the island, carried on against hopeless odds through the whole long summer day, ended with the surrender of the survivors fatigued, outnumbered, and completely surrounded, on the northern summit".{367} Ten weeks and two days had passed since the sea fight in the bay which first had cut off the garrison; seven weeks since the blockade began. Within the twenty days since he took over the command from Nicias, Cleon returned in triumph to Athens, bringing his prisoners with him. "His mad promise was fulfilled."{368}

"Nothing which happened in the whole war", Thucydides writes, "caused greater amazement in Hellas; for it was universally believed that Spartans would never surrender, but whether under straits of famine or any other necessity would fight to the bitter end and perish sword in hand. No one would believe but that those who yielded were not the equals of those who had been slain."{369} It was at least no Athenian but an ally who later made his cruel taunt of a Spartan captive.

"Were your *slain* brave and valiant men? he jeered. To whom the other, sombrely:

"Of great worth the spindle{370} if it picked out the brave."

Thucydides has suffered much reproach for calling Cleon's promise "mad".{371} The epithet has been ascribed to his personal prejudice against the politician, a prejudice not unnatural in one of the latter's victims,{372} but dishonourable to an impartial historian. Mad the promise certainly seemed to those who heard it made at Athens, Thucydides himself among their number. Mad it, in fact, was not, as the issue and the happy success proved. It only obscures the issue (which is the questioning of Thucydides' impartiality) to call, in a fog of words, his Cleon a type, a lesson in morality, violence intoxicated with ambitious passion,{373} and therefore mad. This is Lord Lytton in his latest style. The madness really lay in Cleon's "*I* will bring the men".{374} Demosthenes did the work. But it was Cleon who supplied that over-nervous general with useful troops and desirable energy. "Cleon showed strong military

common sense", that is, he saw the two things needed were light-armed troops and undivided command—by Demosthenes.{375} He knew and had reason to trust in this general's skill. His own lack of any other plan might else make his promise appear so boastful as really to be "mad." Under all the circumstances the epithet *is* an unlucky one. All that can be urged in Thucydides' defence is that it is exactly what men did call the promise in the streets of Athens at the time.

It is, however, Nicias who suffers the most deserved censure for his part in the story. It can hardly be doubted that he forced the command on Cleon expecting and probably desiring—as did many of his party—that the latter would fail. His hot anger of the moment made him forgetful of his city and her interests. So he had "miserably betrayed the dignity of his high office",{376} and was very justly humiliated by his rival's triumphant return. For Nicias had managed to play the most inglorious rôle possible in the whole affair. His impetuous outburst indeed had revenged itself upon his own unlucky head. "He had committed great knavery", the unkindly Grote declares. At least he had given Cleon the opportunity for a success of which that practised politician was never tired of boasting. Even Aristophanes, several years later, cannot refrain from jibing at Nicias gently. In a play called The *Husbandmen*, now lost, there are two Athenian soldiers talking.

> "I want to go a' farming," whines one.
> "Well, who stops you?"
> "You men do. Come, here's an offer—a thousand drachmae to let me resign my command."
> "Taken," the other cries joyfully "Counting, Nicias' thousand, that'll make two."

Nicias' resignation was held cheap.{377}

That general, however, did not retire to his farm in disgust. With unimpaired dignity he took out a squadron of 80 sail, "to be out of the way of Cleon's bitter tongue", an English scholar uncharitably suggests.{378} With it he made a descent on Corinthian territory and fought a skirmish, retiring hastily to his ships when the old men marched out of Corinth seven miles away to the rescue. He then pursued his Periclean ravages along the coast southwards at various places for 40 or 50 miles, built a wall across the neck of Methana promontory near Troezen, left a garrison there, and quietly came back home again. There was no use in the garrison.{379}

Sparta had to wait seven long years before her soldiers "wiped out the disgrace" of the surrender on Sphacteria, surrender in face of overwhelming odds.{380} No wonder that a Cleon

boasted; and small wonder that a Cleon arrogated to himself the credit for the success to which Demosthenes had made at least some contribution. His enemy Aristophanes could at least seize this chance for mockery, and plume himself on his daring at "kicking Cleon in the belly" when Cleon was at his greatest. The *Knights* was the first comedy produced by the poet after the capture of the Spartans. At its very beginning the attack begins in the description of the "flattering, fawning, wheedling, cajoling" Paphlagonian slave, "the tanner", "the greatest rogue and liar in the world", who comes to his master, Demos, the People, imploring him (so says his fellow-slave, Demosthenes):

> "'O Demos, try one case, get the three-obol,
> Then take your bath, gorge, guzzle, eat your fill.
> Would you I set your supper?' Then he'll seize
> A dish some other servant has prepared,
> And serve it up for master; and quite lately
> I'd baked a rich Laconian cake at Pylos,
> When round he runs, filches my cake, and off with it
> To serve it up to Demos as his own."{381}

Two years later Aristophanes applauds himself again:

> "When first he began to exhibit plays, no paltry men for his mark he chose,
> He came in the mood of a Heracles forth to grapple at once with the mightiest foes.
> In the very front of his bold career with the jag-toothed Monster he closed in fight,
> Though out of its fierce eyes flashed and flamed the glare of Cynna's detestable light,
> And a hundred horrible sycophants' tongues were twining and flickering over its head,
> And a voice it had like the roar of a stream which has just brought forth destruction and dread,
> And a Lamia's groin and a camel's loin, and foul as the smell of a seal it smelt.
> But he, when the monstrous form he saw, no bribe he took, and no fear he felt,
> For you he fought and for you he fights."{382}

If Cleon boasted, so did others. If Cleon dwelt on his own war services, boastfulness which grieves us in a Themistocles and would be impossible in a Pericles cannot surprise us in a Cleon. Without his energy the Spartans might never have been taken. Their capture was the

chief success which Athens won. So Cleon proudly went on his way through Athens' streets, scornful of all the pigmy opposition. Elected general for the next year 424 B.C., he incited the Athenians to new efforts. Cythera, Minoa, Nisaea, were all taken; the north-west was finally cleared of the enemy; and a Messenian garrison ravaged the country-side from Pylos. But misfortune followed upon the heels of misfortune. There was failure in Sicily, failure at Megara, failure in Boeotia. Then came the worst blow of all in an unexpected quarter, the north-east. There is little but unlightened gloom in the chapters of Athenian history which follow the story of the "luck of Pylos". {383}

### *NOTE—PYLOS AND SPHACTERIA*

Thucydides' account and the topography of the district concerned have been the subject of careful and patient investigation in comparatively recent years. Above all other contributions in value is Dr. Grundy's masterly paper in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* xvi. (1896), pages 1-54 ("An Investigation of the Topography of the Region of Sphakteria and Pylos," with two maps). In this he presents the results of his survey made in the dangerous month of August 1895. This is the foundation of my whole narrative. The long paper by R. M. Burrows in the same volume, pages 55-76 ("Pylos and Sphacteria"), has a useful sketch plan for military operations and adds something to Dr. Grundy. Also to be considered is the short suggestive paper by H. Awdry ("A New Historical Aspect of the Pylos and Sphacteria Incidents") in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* xx. (1900), pages 14-19. The chapters vi. and vii. in F. M. Cornford's quaint book, *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907) are somewhat rhapsodical, but the Cambridge scholar makes some very good points. Admiral Custance, *War at Sea*, pages 57-60 (1919), adds little.

In our text of Thucydides (iv. 8. 6) there are two clear errors of measurement—if we accept the usual identifications of Sphacteria = Sphagia, Pylos = Palaeo-Kastro. The "size" of Sphacteria Island is given as "about 15 stades", *i.e.* some 3000 yards. The actual length of Sphagia Island is 4800 yards, about stades. And the second channel into the harbour, which is clearly distinguished from the channel over against Pylos, is said to give room for eight or nine triremes to sail through, *i.e.* abreast. The breadth of the channel south of Sphagia Island is some 1400 yards. Even allowing for the lighthouse islet and giving the over ample sea room of 100 yards a trireme we find breadth enough for more than the eight or nine. And it is certain that the depth and nature of this channel today preclude the idea that 2350 years ago its breadth can have been very different.

One older solution of both difficulties is unattractive and unanimously rejected. This so altered the configuration of the region in 425 B.C. as to insulate the present promontory of Palaeo-Kastro completely by abolishing the sandbar north of it (sandbar A) and the end of the sandbar now linking its south-eastern tip with the mainland (sandbar B). So Voithio Kilia bay is supposed to have been connected with the present lagoon and this again with the present Bay of Navarino. Then Palaeo-Kastro itself becomes identified with Sphacteria Island, and the Hill of St. Nicholas with Pylos. The complete circuit of Palaeo-Kastro is 3000 yards. And the supposed channel between it and the tip of sandbar B can be made of the required width for the 8 or 9 triremes.

This identification need not detain us. Dr. Grundy argues very decisively that sandbar A existed in 425 B.C. And the identification which leaves Sphagia Island out of the picture altogether and turns the low hill of St. Nicholas (188 feet high) instead of the strong lofty Palaeo-Kastro (450 feet high) into Demosthenes' fortress of Pylos is quite impossible. If any one thing is certain it is that the modern Sphagia Island is the ancient Sphacteria, and the modern Palaeo-Kastro is the ancient Pylos.

This leaves us still with the two difficulties.

The first, the "size" of Sphacteria, is not very serious. The suggestion that Thucydides' "15 stades" is meant to describe not its whole length, but only that part of the island occupied by the Spartans, is distinctly forced and unhappy. Far more likely is Burrows' suggestion (p. 76) of an error in the numerical signs in the text, whichever system of notation is employed, *i.e.* a corruption of ΔΔΓ into ΔΓ or of κε′ into ιε′—in both cases 25 of into 15. Simplest of all is the solution that Thucydides' informant or informants underestimated the length of the island.

It is generally agreed that the historian himself was at the time at Athens. The vivid description he gives of the scene in the Athenian Assembly really can only come from the pen of one who himself was then present there. Also it seems accepted that he never visited Sphacteria at any time during his 20 years' exile. But there is much dispute concerning his informant or informants. That they were eye-witnesses of the events so graphically described is obvious. But were they Athenians (as most suppose) or Spartans (a prisoner or two) or both? Dr. Grundy urges that he had two informants, the one, a soldier of Demosthenes' garrison, for the tale of Pylos, and the other, a sailor of Eurymedon's fleet, for the tale of Sphacteria. The latter was the better observer of the two. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf pleads (1921) for Athenian sources; A. W. Gomme (*Classical Quarterly*, January 1923) for Spartan.

The whole is guess-work and does not greatly matter. Whoever told the historian the length of the island made an underestimate (unless we prefer to believe in the textual error explanation).

The second difficulty, that of the channel's breadth, has led Dr. Grundy to put forward a most elaborate hypothesis. As an admitted expert in geography he has every right to convince us that in 425 B.C., while sandbar A *was* continuous, sandbar B was *not*. There was the open water between its end and Pylos. The present shallow lagoon was then a deeper and a sheltered harbour. The sand brought down in 2350 years by the little Jalova river (which may also have changed its course) has raised the bottom of the lagoon and linked the sandbar with Palaeo-Kastro. From this he suggests that the second channel was that between the abbreviated sandbar B and the hill of Pylos, the lagoon was the Inner Harbour where the Spartan fleet lay, and the channels its commanders intended but failed to "block" were (1) the Sikia Channel, (2) the channel into the Inner Harbour. This latter therefore can now be made of the required breadth for eight or nine triremes. Then he urges elaborately that Thucydides' two informants misled the historian by applying the term "harbour" to two different sheets of water, the hypothetical soldier to the lagoon, the equally hypothetical sailor to the Bay of Navarino. Thucydides failed to detect this confusion. The Spartans never dreamt of closing the broad deep southern entrance into Navarino Bay itself.

Why then did they place a garrison on Sphagia Island? Surely it was dangerously flung out for no very obvious reason into mid-air, if the enemy could always sail unopposed into Navarino Bay? Granted that the Spartans could not moor ships across the bay's southern entrance. At least they could daily guard this entrance as well as the narrow Sikia Channel by ships deployed in line. So the whole coast-line from Mount Tomaeus on the south (if that were then its name) to Pylos on the north would present an uninterrupted hostile front to a squadron approaching Navarino Bay from the open sea. The Spartan failure lay in the fact that they were caught napping in the early morning before the ships had taken up their stations.

I must prefer the simplest of all explanations of the second difficulty. The lagoon may or may not have been a harbour in 425 B.C. We cannot tell. It does not matter. "Keep the enemy out of the Bay at all costs?" Hence the garrison on Sphacteria, the ships in the bay. There is perhaps a tendency to exaggerate the dimensions of Thucydides' informant's error. Awdry reduces it to a mistake of not more than a quarter of a mile. In any case the eye-witness just miscalculated the channel's breadth. How likely such an error is! Every schoolboy at the seaside, every swimmer, knows how easy it is to misjudge, *i.e.* to underestimate, distances

over water. It is notorious, and a maxim of both military and Boy Scout textbooks, that when you look across water objects appear nearer than they really are. And, finally, it is quite possible, as Burrows felicitously suggests (p. 74), that when the Athenian fleet did arrive on the scene from Prote Island the ships divided and rowed into Navarino Bay, ten ships two abreast in the Sikia Channel, the remaining forty also in five, “loosely extended”, lines, and therefore “eight or nine” abreast by the Southern entrance. And this may be the fact which, incorporated into Thucydides’ narrative, has thrown up a mountain of controversy all built upon the sand.

## CHAPTER VI—ATHENS' FAILURES

### *§ 1. The "strategy of offence" against Boeotia*

IT was not until the year 426 B.C. that Athens first bestirred herself to undertake active operations against Boeotia. With the coming of Cleon there was a new spirit at the War Office. There was also recent provocation by the Boeotians. The revolt of Lesbos in defiance of Athens' sea-power had infuriated the city, and informers denounced the Boeotians, who were kinsmen of the islanders, as concerting with the rebels. The rising had been subdued in 427 B.C., but only at the cost to Athens of a very unpleasant new property tax on her citizens. There was also the fate of Plataea to annoy her. In the summer of 426 B.C. a considerable effort was made. Nicias, one of the generals, who had been sent with the fleet to harry Melos—a very insignificant affair to all except the Melians—was recalled thence and sailed to Oropus on the northern coast of Attica on the borders of Boeotia. There he disembarked at nightfall and at once with 2000 Athenian hoplites crossed the frontier and marched ten miles inland upon the Boeotian city of Tanagra. The force was joined there next morning by the full Athenian land levy under Eurymedon and Hipponicus of the Alcmaeonid clan,{384} which had marched from Athens by the direct way of Phyle over Mount Parnes. There was no Spartan army in Attica that summer, for earthquakes occurring just as the invaders were assembling at the Isthmus of Corinth had sent these in consternation off home again. Hence it was safe for the Athenian soldier to venture earlier than usual out from his city. The large combined force enjoyed a pleasant day ravaging the fields outside Tanagra's walls, and spent the night in camp there. But meanwhile a few Thebans had come to the city's help, and, encouraged by these the citizens took the field and challenged the whole Athenian army to battle. Being heavily outnumbered they were not unnaturally defeated. The victors raised the customary trophy and then promptly departed. If they had hoped to hear of an Athenian army under Demosthenes appearing in the north-west of Boeotia, they were disappointed. The Aetolians had seen to it that Demosthenes did not get through. So the army at Tanagra broke up and marched away, Nicias and his men to the ships, the rest back home to Athens. Nicias did a little further ravaging on the Locrian coast opposite Euboea, and then he too returned to Athens.{385}

It was a petty and somewhat inglorious ending to the "first campaign of offence against Boeotia". All the glory of the incident rests with Tanagra city herself. She was one of the eleven "units" of the Boeotian Confederacy and contributed therefore just 1000 heavy infantry and 100 cavalry to the League's army.{386} Even when strengthened and exhilarated by the

handful of Thebans this was but a small force to march out so boldly against Nicias and Eurymedon. To so low an ebb had the reputation of the Athenian land army sunk! And though the latter had won the victory, yet their effort was quite enough to exhaust the Athenians' energy for the time being. Next year they were engrossed in the excitement of events at Pylos and Sphacteria. There was also a Spartan army once again in Attica. But the capture of the Spartan prisoners put an end once and for all to this latter danger, and in the elation of this great success the War Office in 424 B.C. revived its scheme for a concerted assault on Boeotia simultaneously from different quarters.

The Athenian strategy of offence was to divide and conquer. It was embarrassing that the army had not the slightest desire to fight a pitched battle against the united Boeotian forces, even when these latter were left to themselves and had no Peloponnesians to help them. It was also unfortunate that Plataea could no longer serve as one of the projected bases for operation. Others, however, could be devised. If the Thebans could at one and the same time hear of the invasion of Boeotia upon several different and widely separated frontiers, their attention might be so distracted that the whole land might be in a blaze before they had made up their minds which way to march to extinguish the conflagration. Three such frontiers offered possibilities. The eastern frontier was easily reached by way of the land route through Decelea to Oropus, or, as two years earlier, by sea. The southern frontier was equally accessible by sea from Naupactus. On the north-west frontier and the Phocian border there was now no hope of an Athenian army. This scheme had come finally to grief. But there were still Boeotians of democratic favour and, therefore, of Athenian sympathies. Thebes was not too kindly a mistress of the Confederation, and there were cities within it which were believed not to love her overmuch. Thespiae for instance had old ties of friendship with Athens. Orchomenus had been famous long before Thebes had usurped the first place among the cities. Chaeronea was full of democrats. Perhaps they could be induced to rise against Thebes, if well encouraged. The Phocians, too, hated the Locrians, Thebes' friends, more than they loved the Thebans. Such were the ingredients of the dish. Out of them there was concocted the plan of 424 B.C. The chief credit for its making belongs to a Theban, an exile from his country, one Ptoeodorus by name, and to other democratic malcontents in various cities of Boeotia. The scheme had then been laid before the Athenian military experts Demosthenes and Hippocrates, colleagues this year in command. In its final shape it took the following form. There should be three columns of attack, one on the south-west, one on the north-west, one on the east. On the south-west Demosthenes was to sail from Naupactus with 40 ships and his army to the port of Siphae. This

port belonged to Thespiae. It was to be betrayed to him by democratic plotters. On the north-west there was to be a local rising of adherents with Chaeronea on the Phocian border as its centre. This place was in dependence on Orchomenus. There was in the neighbourhood a band of exiles, men of Orchomenus, who kept in their pay a company of Peloponnesian mercenaries. These promised to bring Chaeronea over, and some Phocians also were in the plot. Finally the main Athenian army under Hippocrates was to seize and fortify the Temple of Apollo at Delium, a place on the coast-line north of Oropus, not far from Tanagra. All these three places Siphae, Chaeronea, and Delium were to be taken on one and the same day. This should provoke an immediate democratic rising everywhere in Boeotia—so the schemers hoped. Even if this were delayed, at least there would be three strong positions in the land to serve as rallying points for neighbouring malcontents and as bases for any following military operations. Thebes would be threatened from three sides at once. The enemy's forces would be divided. Things would go "suitably" enough.{387}

It might seem a pity that a fourth line of attack, that from the north, could not have been added to the three, and Thessalian cavalry have been brought down to aid the enterprise, especially since the Boeotians were strong in this arm. But perhaps the new Spartan fort at Heraclea barred the way,{388} and the strategists rested content with their three frontiers.

Even without this addition it was an elaborate scheme enough. And on one asset the Athenians could certainly count, namely, the isolation of Boeotia. The enemy's southern allies were far too dispirited and hampered by their prisoners at Athens to intervene. Demosthenes might march up country from Siphae to Thespiae or wherever he pleased without any fear of a Spartan force appearing on his flank from Aegosthena. The threatened Boeotians must work out their own salvation by and for themselves.

One other plea may be entered on the scheme's behalf. If there was to be any strategy of offence at all against Boeotia, some such plan was not only the most promising, but it was the only possible scheme. The great alternative was to hurl the entire land army straight at Thebes. Sparta would not interfere. Of course diversions by simultaneous risings at places like Chaeronea and Thespiae would have been also useful. But the kernel of this alternative possibility was direct attack on the enemy's main force. The Athenian land army heavily outnumbered the Boeotian in infantry. But such a strategy was altogether too simple and heroic for the subtle wits and somewhat faint hearts of Athen's politicians. There was indeed "a marked reluctance to take the bull by the horns".{389} Far better make use of political motives

and democratic tendencies. Moreover, if the men of a single city Tanagra had dared fight the whole land levy because a handful of Thebans had come to help them——!

So the more elaborate strategy was adopted and came to instant and ignominious collapse. There was some miscalculation as to dates. Demosthenes arrived off Siphae too soon. This in itself mattered very little. The whole plot had long since been given away by a local Phocian spy, who disclosed it to the Spartans. These at once sent word of it in every detail to the Boeotians, who promptly called out all their forces. Everything so far was quiet in the direction of Delium. There was no need to keep the army together at Thebes. To this extent the muddle about the day was unfortunate for the conspirators. Garrisons were thrown into Siphae and Chaeronea as soon as Demosthenes' arrival off the coast was known, if not before. He sailed sadly away. The democrats and exiles in the north-west and elsewhere heard of this failure and dared not stir. The Boeotians withdrew their garrison from Siphae. When, after all this, Hippocrates started out from Athens and on the third day duly arrived with the entire land army of over 17,000 men at Delium and proceeded to fortify the temple there, the whole of the Boeotian forces were free to move against him. Which was precisely what the Athenians had most desired to avoid.[{390}]

The responsibility for the failure of the whole strategical plan has been fastened on Demosthenes. "In so vital a matter", it has been said, "he could not even keep count of days." "Being a genius he despised details and arrived too soon. The courage of the troops at Delium was on a par with the intelligence of the commanders"—and so forth.[{391}] Neither is a German's suggestion that Demosthenes "suspected treachery and would not wait" very helpful.[{392}] For the mistake in the day certainly helped to wreck the scheme. Thucydides himself does not say whether it was Demosthenes or his colleague Hippocrates who blundered. At least his own fellow-citizens, who were so quick to punish in their law courts a general's failure, whether deservedly or undeservedly, never laid the blame at Demosthenes' door, and he continued in command.

In reality, betrayal, when so many were in the plot, was almost inevitable from the first, and it was this, and not the miscalculation of time, which proved fatal. But the whole strategical scheme was quite radically unsound. It was to begin with far too complicated, if the three armies engaged in the plan were intended to do more than take and hold three forts and wait to see what happened. The co-operation of armies acting from different bases of supply has been condemned again and again by Napoleon. Simplicity, he declares, is the keynote of success in

warlike operations. If this simultaneous attack had been made on the three separate fronts, the Thebans had the entire advantage of “interior lines”, and could have directed their own army upon whichever point of attack they pleased. There is no reason to suppose that they would have lost their heads. Quite a small part of their available troops could have “contained” the democrats at Chaeronea (these being, like coneys, a feeble folk). A second small force could have watched Hippocrates at Delium, whose one and only desire was to fortify the temple. The rest would have come down upon Demosthenes and he would have been lucky to escape to his ships without great scathe. Then it would have been Hippocrates’ turn. If, however, the plan contemplated no actual co-operation in the field, the seizing of the three forts might speedily have brought results more pleasing to the Thebans than to the invaders. The success of the fortification of Pylos seems to have given the Athenians a very exaggerated opinion of the value of such pinpricks. In this whole strategy of offence against Boeotia there was one ultimate and most fatal weakness. The point of a “strategy of division” is to be able to bring to bear at the most decisive point a greater number of men for battle than the enemy’s. In the words of the American Confederate, General Forrest, to “get there fustest with the mostest men” is the aim of the whole. But the Athenians never proposed to “get there” at all. They never intended to fight a battle with the Thebans at the last resort or at any resort. Such a strategy which relies for its success on the politician and not on the soldier is doomed from the outset. It was poetic justice which turned it, sorely against the Athenian general’s will, into a mere affair of tactics, and produced as its fruit the most serious pitched battle that had hitherto been fought.

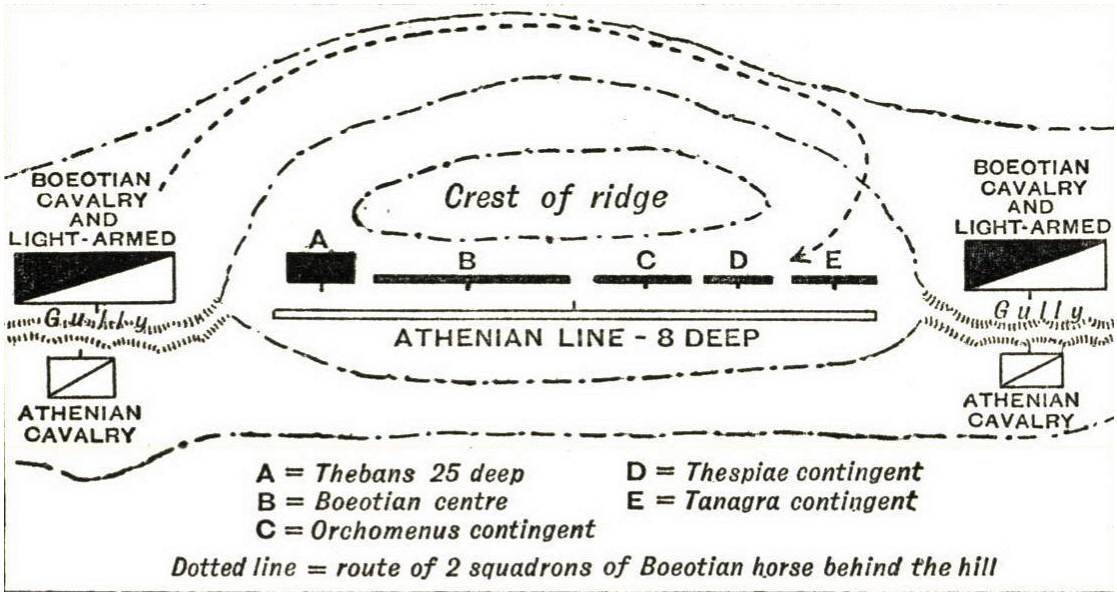
## *§ 2.* The battle of Delium[{393}]

Hippocrates arrived at Delium. He spent the best part of three days in constructing elaborate defences round the Temple of Apollo there. Then the light-armed troops, a large, disorganised, and badly armed mob, cheerfully hastened on their way home and the greater number of them disappeared beyond recall. The hoplites, 7000 in number, halted a mile away from the Temple fort, just within the Attic frontier, piled their arms, and proceeded to encamp. The general himself was still in the fort, supervising the final touches of the defensive works and arranging for the posting of its guards. At that moment the whole Boeotian army, 7000 hoplites, 10,000 light-armed, 1000 cavalry, and 500 targeteers (“peltasts”) came marching down upon him from Tanagra, where they had been mustering. Their general was Pagondas, one of the two Theban magistrates of the year. Thespiae and Orchomenus among the other

towns had duly sent their contingents, democratic sentiments notwithstanding. So much for political propaganda (in Boeotia at least) in time of war and invasion.

Pagondas was accompanied by other magistrates of the Boeotian Confederacy. These were reluctant to pursue the Athenians. The foe were over the border again. Why not let them go quietly on their way home? But the fiery Theban was of a very different mind. He harangued his army, division by division. Being a good soldier, he would not have them all leave their arms together in the near presence of even an Athenian enemy. His speech was brief, valorous, and to the point. “These Athenians were their immemorial foes wherever they happened to be. They had just dared to construct a fort, and this at least was on Boeotian soil, even if their army had just left it. Fight them they could and would. They had thrashed them in the past at Coronea. They would do so again.” The troops were of the general’s mind. Pagondas moved them swiftly forward. But speeches, though brief, if repeated some few times, take up precious time. It was getting near dusk on a winter afternoon when Pagondas came into actual touch with the enemy. His colleagues’ doubts and his oratory had given the enemy general Hippocrates time to make disposition of his own available troops to meet the coming attack.

Pagondas halted his men at the foot of some rising ground which lay between him and the enemy beyond the ridge. He there formed them into line of battle, the cavalry and light-armed on either wing, the heavy infantry in the centre. The right of the infantry line was composed of his best troops, the Thebans, and these were massed in column, twenty-five deep, a very novel idea, for which, as things turned out, the general deserves the greatest credit.{394} His centre consisted of the contingents from the district of Lake Copais and elsewhere, his left of those of Thespiae, Tanagra, and Orchomenus, 3000 strong. The depth of both his centre and left varied. Beyond the ridge, the Athenians had meanwhile formed up in one long line of battle eight deep, making a battle front of half a mile, with their cavalry and the few light-armed who remained also on either wing. A force of 300 cavalry had been left a mile away in the Temple fort with orders to attack the enemy in the course of the engagement should opportunity occur. Pagondas for his part had detailed a force to keep these under observation, and they took no part in the battle.




The Athenian general Hippocrates was proceeding along his line delivering the customary exhortations. He had reached half-way when his oratory was interrupted. The whole Boeotian army appeared on top of the ridge and came shouting down the slope. At Hippocrates' command the long Athenian line charged at the double up hill against them. This order was perhaps unwise. The two armies were at once hotly engaged in the usual shock-and-thrust tactics of Greek heavy infantry. In this Pagondas had secured at least two notable advantages, the downward slope for his charge and the massed weight of his right wing. In any such encounter of line against line only the first two or three ranks could possibly use their spears, whether the whole line were eight or twenty-five deep. The whole idea was by the very force of the impact to break through the enemy's opposing line and deal individually afterwards with its broken and panic-stricken fragments. The open order of the famous Roman manipular system was beyond the wit of Greek inventiveness, or relied too much upon the initiative of the company leader and the courage of the individual soldier to be adopted by Greek or Macedonian armies.

It was not, however, the whole length of the line on both sides at the battle of Delium which came into actual conflict with the enemy. The charging lines found on both flanks their way impeded by water-logged gullies at foot of the ridge. Only the infantry closed along the half mile of front between the gullies.

The Athenian right at first did valiantly. They routed the men of Tanagra and Orchomenus, who fled, and closed round encircling the men of Thespiae, who stood their ground bravely and were cut down fighting desperately hand to hand. As the number of hoplites on both sides

was much the same, the Athenian right, in view of the great depth of the Theban right, may have outflanked the enemy's left very considerably from the first, unless wide gaps separated the various Boeotian contingents. Whatever the reason, in this part of the field the Athenians for the time being had the mastery. So dense was the *mêlée* here that the victors even found themselves smiting their own men. The routed Boeotian left inclined inwards towards their centre, hotly pressed by the Athenians. But meanwhile on the other wing the heavy Theban column had gained ground. By superior weight they drove the Athenian left back step by step. For there was no rout. At this point a master-stroke by Pagondas decided the whole issue. Seeing his own left in dire distress, he sent peremptory orders to two squadrons of his useless cavalry which were in immediate touch with him on his right. They rode round at the foot of the hill under the crest behind them and came down over the ridge like a thunderbolt upon the flank and rear of the Athenian right, as this inclined inwards in pursuit of the Boeotian left. Their coming was utterly unexpected, and, thanks to the hill, unseen. The Athenians in a moment found the troopers among them slashing at their backs and unprotected sides. Taken in utter surprise, and thinking the cavalry the advance guard of yet another army, the Athenian right broke and fled in complete confusion. By this time the Theban wedge had broken into and through the thin opposing line of the Athenian left. The panic and rout became general. Pagondas' victory was complete. He himself had lost upwards of 500 men. Nearly a thousand of the enemy and Hippocrates himself lay dead upon the field. The rest fled, some to the sea and the Temple fort at Delium, some for Oropus, some to the sheltering wilds of Mount Parnes. The Boeotian cavalry pursued the fugitives with vigour. Some Locrian troops, which had arrived on the scene just as the rout began, joined freshly and gleefully in the chase. But the battle began only in the late afternoon, and kindly night soon put an end to the slaughter. Next day Pagondas marched his army back to Tanagra. The Athenian garrison still retained the fort at Delium, which at the moment Pagondas left alone. And ships took back to Athens the remnants of the army which had fled to the coast.

When the Athenians sent a herald to ask for their dead the Boeotians, accusing the others of sacrilege, bade them evacuate the Temple first. A curious wordy dispute followed in which the Boeotians, the "Dutchmen of Greece", had by no means the worst of the argument, propounding a dilemma which the sharp-witted Athenians found it quite impossible to rebut. They went without their dead and kept the Temple fort. This atrocious behaviour of the Thebans inspired the Athenian tragic poet, Euripides, to the fury of that one of his ninety-two plays called the *Suppliants*. As in the legendary days of Adrastus, so now once again the Thebans had

“confounded the customs of all Hellas.” Theseus the Athenian hero must to the rescue of the dead. “I will go about this business”, he cries, “and rescue the dead by words persuasive. But if they fail then ‘tis the spear shall forthwith decide this issue, nor will Heaven grudge me this.”{395} Theseus’ descendants found neither persuasive words nor spears to serve their turn. A fortnight later, the Boeotians, reinforced from many quarters, advanced again from Tanagra and took the fort by storm. Then they restored the dead when the herald came again—to his surprise.

Two famous Athenians took part in the battle and retreat of Delium, the philosopher Socrates, then a vigorous managed forty-four, and his brilliant and much-loved pupil Alcibiades, a youth of some twenty-five years of age. Socrates had already saved the lad’s life by gallantry when they were in the army together at the siege of Potidaea eight years earlier and he rescued the wounded boy.{396} It is Alcibiades whom Plato makes tell the poet Aristophanes the story of the flight from the battle-field of Delium.

> “Socrates”, he says, “was serving among the heavy armed. I was myself in the cavalry and therefore comparatively out of danger. The troops were in flight when I met him and Laches retreating, and I told them not to be dismayed for I would stay by them. There you might have seen him, Aristophanes, just as you describe him, as if he were in the streets of Athens, ‘with his nose in the air and rolling his eyes about’, stalking along like a pelican, calmly regarding enemies as well as friends, making it very clear to every one, however far away, that if any one attacked him he would put up a stout resistance. This was the way in which he and his comrade escaped. For it is this kind of man who is never touched in war. It is those who run away headlong who are pursued. I noticed particularly how superior in sangfroid he was to Laches.”{397}
>
> “I can tell you”, Plato makes Laches remark elsewhere, “that if others then had only been like Socrates, the honour of our country would have been upheld, and the great defeat would never have occurred.”{398}

So, at Athens, generals and philosophers fought side by side in the ranks.

Of all the land battles of the great war, none, except possibly that of Mantinea six years later, can compete with the battle of Delium in interest. Two of the leading military powers of Greece were matched together in straightforward pitched fighting. In recent years Athens had defeated Thebes and Thebes Athens. Now the matter was put beyond dispute. No Athenian army ever dared cross the border to invade Boeotia again, and the Boeotians ravaged Attica whenever and wherever they pleased. The “strategy of offence against Boeotia” was indeed at an end.

The Theban general Pagondas makes just this one solitary appearance in history. He is never heard of otherwise, whether before or since his victory. But he has earned a foremost

place in the whole list of Greek generals. In his determination to fight, in his skilful use of the ground, in his new infantry formation,[{399}] and in his quick use of his cavalry at the very crisis of the engagement—in all four respects he proved himself a general of a calibre but rarely discoverable in the annals of ancient Greek warfare. Why he is never employed again is one of the puzzles of the war, one of the annoyances which the "silence of Thucydides" sometimes causes.

And the Theban soldier may share in his general's glory. Before the great war he was known as a stubborn fighter. But of all the armies of Greek states it is the Boeotian army only which comes through that war without defeat and emerges with an enhanced reputation. The Thebans are to be the finest troops of the succeeding century and the Theban Epaminondas the greatest of all warrior generals before Alexander. At Delium coming events cast their shadows before. For all the remaining twenty years of the great war the Boeotians remained the deadliest and the most implacable of all the foes of Athens. Whenever they saw a chance to strike, they struck. Panactum, the Athenian fort near the frontier, was betrayed to them in 422 B.C. and they stoutly refused to give it back when Sparta requested this, its surrender being one of the terms of the Fifty Years' Peace which she concluded with Athens the next year. When Sparta prayed for Panactum for herself, they bought an alliance with it—which they meant to use in fresh war against Athens—and then razed the fort to the ground before they handed back the site.[{400}] No Athenian garrison should hold the place again. So the angry Athenians were driven into the Argive alliance which soon led again to war. Nor would the Boeotians ever for their part consent to the Fifty Years' Peace. At the best they accepted only an armistice with Athens, terminable at ten days' notice.[{401}] They sent their troops presently to the Peloponnese to fight at Sparta's side against the Argives and the Athenians.[{402}] They sent 300 men to Syracuse in 413 to help this city in her bitter need. It was these soldiers' stand in that fierce night struggle on Epipolae's heights which first turned the tide of battle and brought defeat and disaster upon the Athenians.[{403}] They offered ships to Sparta for the naval war of 412 B.C., and actively promoted Lesbos' short-lived revolt against Athens in that same year.[{404}] Boeotian ships fought at Cynossema next year.[{405}] Boeotian troops helped to garrison Byzantium when the great city revolted from Athens.[{406}] Meanwhile in the homeland they seized two more forts in Attica by betrayal, Oropus in 412 B.C. and Oenoe in 411 B.C.[{407}] They joined the men of Chalcis in Euboea on the opposite shore of the Euripus channel in throwing a bridge across from the mainland, so that Euboea was finally relieved of the fear of being cut off by Athens' fleet and passed completely out of Athenian control.[{408}] They had

helped King Agis to fortify Decelea in 413 B.C., and no men made such profit from this enterprise as did they. They took over all the prisoners and other spoils of war, the results of the garrison's raiding, at a small price, says a writer, who may be Cratippus, and "carried off to their homes all the building material and the furniture in Attica, beginning with the timber and the tiles of the houses". The countryside of Attica, he says, was the most lavishly adorned and decorated in the whole of Greece. It had not suffered very much in all the earlier raids. Also it had enjoyed a dozen years of comparative quiet. Now the Boeotians joyfully spoiled it, and most thoroughly. "So Thebes increased ever more greatly in riches and prosperity at Athens' expense."{409} And finally it was Thebes who, with Corinth, demanded the utter destruction of her rival, the slaughter and enslavement of her population, when Athens lay at end of the war helpless at her victors' mercy.{410} Then only Sparta saved Athens from the uttermost penalty which the savage ferocity of Thebes expected to exact.

### *§ 3. Sicily: the Congress of Gela*

At the beginning of the great war the Greek cities of Sicily and lower Italy were as divided in their sympathy between the combatants as was the rest of the Greek world. Corinth and Sparta, however, could count a larger number of adherents in the west than could Athens. Democracy here made a feebler appeal than did race. The "Chalcidian" or Ionian element which favoured Athens was far weaker than the Dorian, and the chief Dorian city, Syracuse, though a democracy, was deeply suspicious of the rival democracy of Athens. Only Camarina allowed her dislike of Syracuse to outweigh her Dorian origin. Syracuse had the not unnatural ambition to control if not to rule every other Sicilian city. In the far west of the great island there were still Phoenician settlements. But Carthage, which might have championed their cause, had been so quiet for nearly half a century that Greeks almost forgot her existence, or, if they remembered her, talked of her slightingly.{411} They had not the least suspicion how terrible the menace was which lurked on the African shore. The native tribes of Sicily who still owned the interior of the island were so ringed round by the Greek cities on the coast that the latter no longer went in the least fear of them, ever since in the middle of the century Syracuse had crushed the native Sicel rising under Ducetius its leader. The barbarian peril was ever present to the Greeks who settled on the coast of Italy. In Sicily it no longer existed. The natives were useful allies in the never-ceasing quarrels between the Greek cities which made a bear garden of Sicily. All that frustrated Syracusan ambitions was the jealous hatred of her fellow-Greeks. These, the "Ionian" element in the island, knowing themselves inferior in strength, looked

anxiously abroad for help. So it came to pass that they implored aid from Athens, and that Athens listened eagerly. Every commercial city in antiquity dreamed of a monopoly of markets as the great ideal. Athens could not run the risk of exclusion from every port in the western seas. In lower Italy she had a port of call in Thurii, which, twelve years before the war, Pericles had established on the site of Athens' old friend and ally Sybaris. But the overland route hence to the small harbours and coasting vessels of the Tuscan sea was not enough, and Dorian Taras (Tarentum) was an uncomfortably close neighbour to Thurii with its mixed population and divided interests. Athens needed safe passage through the straits of Messina for her own ships. And she must encourage her partisans in Sicily as well. So Pericles on one and the same day in 433 B.C. concluded his alliances with Leontini in the east of Sicily, 20 miles only from Syracuse, and with Rhegium on the Italian side of the straits in Messina. The alliance with Corcyra, the half-way house to the west, quickly followed. These alliances helped to precipitate the great war, as has been shown.

During the first four years of the war the Athenians' attention was engrossed elsewhere. It was not until 427 B.C., when Cleon's activity at Athens becomes for the first time marked, that an Athenian squadron of 20 ships appeared in Sicilian waters in answer to new appeals from Leontini and Rhegium for help against Syracuse. The Athenian admiral Laches showed little activity and won small successes of no importance. Athens was urged to send a stronger force in aid. Three new generals were chosen for the purpose. The first, Pythodorus, came out beforehand and superseded Laches in the winter of 426 B.C. His two colleagues, Eurymedon and Sophocles, with the bulk of the new fleet, did not reach Sicily until the late summer of 425 B.C. They had been delayed by those events at Pylos and Corcyra which have already been narrated.

There was now the very considerable fleet of 60 Athenian vessels in Sicilian waters. Meanwhile there had been endless fighting among the cities both by sea and land. Every one might well be weary of all this aimless and profitless bloodshed. To Syracuse the arrival of the new Athenian fleet seemed ominous. At this point there comes upon the stage the only striking Sicilian personality of the war in the person of Hermocrates the Syracusan. Hermocrates, statesman, general, and orator, a man of good birth, led the Syracusan democracy, it has been said, much as some Florentine noble the equally suspicious burghers of his Italian city. Too much of a noble to please the Syracusan *popolo minuto*, the "little folk", he was to be the saviour of his city in the hour of her extremest peril, and was discarded by his ungrateful

citizens when that peril was past. The Syracusan democrats had a greater soldier for their Pericles, and, perhaps for that very reason, trusted him less.{412}

Now in the spring of 424 B.C., before the military or naval operations of the year could begin, at Hermocrates' instigation in chief, there was held at Gela, on the southern coast of the island, a Congress to which all the Sicilian cities sent representatives to discuss the situation. It is perhaps the first example of a Peace Conference in Greek history. Hermocrates harangued the Congress at some length.{413} The gist of his speech was the advocacy of a special and a novel policy, that of Sicily for the Sicilians. The Oxford historian Freeman most aptly labelled it the "Monroe doctrine of ancient Sicily".{414} Let all Sicilians agree, Hermocrates urged, to settle their differences for the future by and for themselves, without inviting or permitting any interference from outside from any quarter whatever. Keep the "foreigner" out. At the moment, make peace and bid the Athenians go. The ambition of this restless people was just a curse and a menace to them all. For the future, if disputes again arose—let them bide their time. The future must see to it. At the present, Syracuse herself would make every concession to secure a lasting and an honourable peace. Would not the other cities do the like? Dorians might yield to Dorians, Ionians to Ionians, without disgrace. But there was a broader view than this.

> "Let us remember", the great orator cried, "that we are all inhabitants of one island home, all called by one common name, Sicilians. If need be we will fight—among ourselves: we will make peace again—among ourselves. But we will always, if we be wise, unite as one man against the invader. When a single one of us suffers, all are imperilled. Never again will we call in allies from abroad, no, nor pretended mediators. So we gain for our Sicily at once two great blessings. She will be rid of the Athenians and of civil war. So also for all time to come we shall keep our island free and our own, and who is he who will dare then assail us?"{415}

The orator gained his heart's desire. His eloquence swept the Congress off its feet. The delegates unanimously decided to make peace, and, moreover, at once arranged its terms. The three Athenian admirals were informed by their erstwhile allies that Athens could be a party to the peace if she liked. The unlucky three had no choice. No possible room was left them for remaining. They accepted the proposal. The peace was made. The Athenians sailed back home, to be greeted at Athens with furious indignation by the people. They must surely have been bribed to betray Athens' interests in this hopeless fashion. Two of them, Pythodorus and Sophocles, were promptly sent into exile. The third, Eurymedon, escaped with the payment of a fine. He presently was taken back into favour and nine years later died in battle in Syracuse's Great Harbour. There is a Pythodorus also who is general again later, who may or may not be the same man. Sophocles at least now disappears from the record,{416} to reappear perhaps only

as an old grey-haired “Counsellor” in 411 B.C.

The Congress of Gela was the most notable diplomatic victory for Hermocrates. It is just here that on reflection a difficulty arises.

In an unkindly world noble utterances are apt to excite some brutal scepticism. Oratory and sentiment are all very well, both for home and for international consumption. But common sense and self-interest have an unlucky habit of stepping in, crushingly, on top of the “sob-stuff”. “Sicily for the Sicilians!” Cui bono? once again. Who stood to gain by the policy? Clearly, whichever city in Sicily was the most powerful of all. Which city was this? Syracuse, beyond a doubt. What had driven the weaker cities to appeal to Athens in the first instance? The strength of Syracuse. Who was it now recommended the policy? A Syracusan.

Why then did the Ionian cities now agree to it, and politely bow the Athenians out of Sicily?

A second, smaller, but none the less curious difficulty occurs in the story as told by Thucydides.

> “The Athenians”, the historian makes Hermocrates declare, “are here with a few ships now. At some future day, when they see that we are exhausted, it is likely that they will come again with a larger armament and try to subdue the whole of Sicily.”{417}

In themselves, 60 ships cannot possibly be described as “few.” What would not Phormio have given for so “few”? This so puzzled ancient commentators that some left the words out. {418} A modern suggests that the words “not a few” should be substituted! The English historian Grote is driven to the opinion that Thucydides is here guilty (or rather makes Hermocrates himself guilty) of what is really a monstrous anachronism. Sixty ships are indeed few in comparison with the Athenian armada which came to Syracuse nine years later. The orator must have the armada in his mind!{419}

Yet to dismiss this difficulty with the reflection that Thucydides is just being wise after the event is a poor tribute to the historian. Another solution has been suggested, that the key to both difficulties, the major and the minor, is to be found not at Gela nor at Syracuse but in Athens: not in Thucydides but in the playwright Aristophanes.

Among the politicians in Athens at this time there was a certain Hyperbolus “the potter” or “the lamp-maker”, who was in notoriety second only to Cleon himself. His pottery consisted of small earthenware lamps, and he was in a small way of business, hawking the goods himself

on trays for sale in the streets. But he was a forcible and violent speaker, a Red of the Reds. The writers of comedies one and all attacked him and his mother impetuously, some of them devoting to his person whole plays which now, unhappily, are lost.{420} The grave historian, Thucydides, contents himself with one scathing mention, almost in passing. Though the man had been active in Athenian politics for many a long year before he was in surprising fashion banished from Athens in 417 B.C.,{421} the historian does not deign to take any notice of him until his actual death in the summer of 411 B.C., six years later. Hyperbolus was then still an exile on Samos. A conspiracy was at the time afoot on the island to upset the democracy there. The conspirators began their proceedings by assassinating Hyperbolus. Then, and then only, Thucydides makes mention of him in these terms:

> "There was a certain Hyperbolus, a scoundrelly fellow, who had been exiled not for any fear of his power and influence, but for his villainy and because the city was ashamed of him. He was assassinated."{422}

Thucydides' long and contemptuous silence about him, and this, the most cruel of all brief epitaphs on a dead man ever written, obscure the fact that Hyperbolus in the earlier years of the war was a recognised leader, a "vile leader" Aristophanes calls him, of the people, a man to whom they delighted to listen.

Now in the month of February of the year 424 B.C., at the spring festival, the poet Aristophanes produced upon the stage one of the most exciting of all his comedies, that of the *Knights*. In the main, the comedy is a most gorgeous onslaught on the politician Cleon, the hero of the moment (after the triumph of Sphacteria) and the darling of the people. At the last moment before the play was produced, the playwright set to work to change its ending, though with no thought of caution in his mind. Time was running short. A fellow playwright, Eupolis by name, came to his help.{423} Aristophanes and Eupolis are the Beaumont and Fletcher of the Athenian stage, though their collaboration was less close and certainly less friendly than that of the Englishmen. The "conference of triremes" in the *Knights* is attributed to the pen of Eupolis. Three ships talk together, an old veteran warship, a young maiden galley, and a third, "H.M.S." Nauphante.

> "Recently, 'tis said, our galleys met their prospects to discuss,
> And an old experienced trireme introduced the subject thus;
> 'Have ye heard the news, my sisters? 'tis the talk in every street,
> That Hyperbolus the worthless vapid townsman would a fleet
> Of one hundred lovely galleys lead to Carthage far away.'
> Over every prow there mantled deep resentment and dismay.

Up and spoke a little galley—no man's boarding yet knew she—
'Save us! such a scurvy fellow never shall be lord of me.
Here I'd liefer rot and moulder and be eaten up of worms.'
'Nor Nauphante, Nauson's daughter, shall he board on any terms;
I like you, can feel the insult; I'm of pine and timber knit.
Wherefore, if the measure passes, I propose we sail and sit
Suppliant at the shrine of Theseus, or the Dead Avenging Powers.
He shall ne'er, as our commander, foot it o'er this land of ours
If he wants a little voyage, let him launch his *sale*-trays,
those Whereupon he sold his lanterns, steering to the kites and crows.'"{424}

One hundred triremes for Carthage—this is what Hyperbolus proposes, to every one's excitement, in January of the year 424 B.C. In actual fact the proposal came to nothing, and Thucydides therefore takes no notice of it. Doubtless Athens had ships enough. And Carthage had long been in men's minds. The gaze of the more adventurous had long embraced the wide seas from Caria to Carthage and continued to indulge in dreams of so rich and easy an adventure.{425} But at the moment, in 424 B.C., Cleon and his party had so many forward schemes on hand that they had, however regretfully, to postpone some. There was Megara now really to be taken, and, later in the year, the great offence against Boeotia to be essayed. These had first claim. For the latter project they needed all their light-armed troops. The navy also had a claim on these to serve as sailors. The men could not be in two places at one and the same time. Surely the 60 ships in Sicilian waters must be enough for the time being. Possibly next year—if all went well. Everything was bound to go well. The Athenians were so elated this year, says Thucydides, that:

"they expected to accomplish everything, possible or impossible, with any force, great or small. In their present prosperity they were indignant at the mere notion of a reverse."{426}

Therefore Hyperbolus' scheme was dropped. As things turned out, Syracuse and not Carthage was to be the Constantinople of the great war for Athens.

But the consternation at Gela when the congress met in the following April may be imagined. The news of the scheme had reached the town. It was too early in the year to be certain whether or not the hundred ships would be coming. *If* they sailed, they must most assuredly come via Sicily. One hundred ships more! Sixty ships were few in comparison indeed to these. One hundred and sixty ships! This was, in blunt language, altogether too much of a good thing even for Athens' own allies in the island. Everyone did honestly know that

Athens *was* extraordinarily ambitious. No man of sense could really believe she was nobly disinterested. One hundred and sixty ships! Hermocrates offered very fair terms for a lasting peace. Accept them promptly and bid the sixty go!

So the sixty went. The one hundred never came. Not a single Athenian ship was left in Sicilian waters. Sicily was added to Boeotia as a dismal failure for Athens of the year 424 B.C.{427}

Two years later, Phaeax, an Athenian of some small repute, came with two ships cautiously creeping into western seas to encourage the city's partisans. He found Leontini now a deserted site, Camarina and Acragas friendly, Locri in Italy ready for an alliance with Athens. Then he sailed back home, able at least to report that there were once again adherents in the west.{428} The "Monroe Doctrine of Ancient Sicily" was not provocative of peace.

Silence for seven years settles down on the island. The first Athenian interferences in Sicily had ended in a sore rebuff.

### *§ 4. Megara: the Athenian capture of Nisaea*{429}

To gain Megara and to keep a firm hold over the subjects of the Empire were the two principles of action which Pericles had bequeathed as legacies to his successors. As soon as, in 427 B.C., these had vindicated the second by their crushing of the revolt of Lesbos, they turned their attention to still more devices for pursuing the first. There lay off Nisaea, Megara's port on the Saronic Gulf, an "island" named Minoa, just at the harbour mouth. So shallow was the water between it and the mainland that a causeway connected the two, just as Holy Island is similarly linked with the Northumbrian coast. Either end of the dyke was protected by a tower. The tiny islet which today is off the coast is too distant from this to suit the historian's description, and Minoa seems to be what is now the long promontory stretching out east of Nisaea towards Salamis. The examples of the conversion of islands into peninsulae, we are told, are numerous on the coasts of Greece.{430}

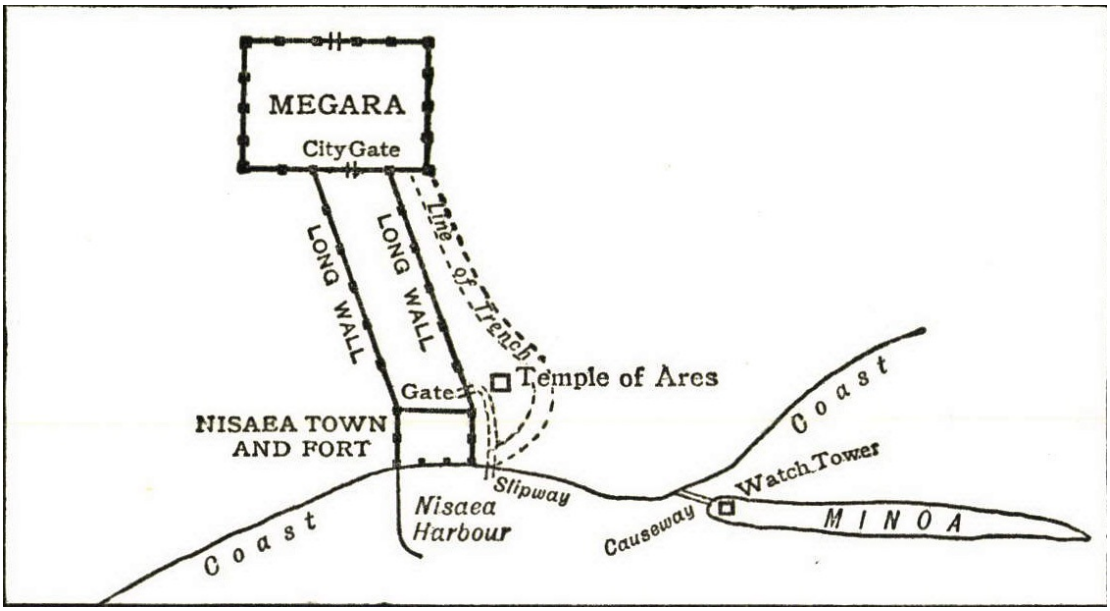
The Athenians determined to take Minoa. From it they could see every boat in Nisaea harbour. The night raid hence upon Salamis two years before was not forgotten.{431} An Athenian garrison on the island would prevent any such surprise again. Nicias was despatched in the summer of 427 B.C. upon the task. He had no difficulty in carrying it out in a few days. Having taken both towers and cleared the passage between island and mainland, he built a wall to cut off the approach by the causeway, and, leaving a garrison on the island, sailed off

home again.[{432}]

Megara was now in worse plight than ever. Twice a year, every year, in spring and autumn, her fields were invaded and her crops (if any were planted) were destroyed. Now nothing whatever could creep into Nisaea harbour unobserved. Not even Nisaea was really her own, for Sparta did not trust her and had placed a Peloponnesian garrison in the harbour town. Food could still come in by Pagae. But presently worse still befel. Faction fighting broke out in Megara's streets. The extremists were driven out by the democrats. The fugitives seized Pagae and carried on a merry course of plundering the country from that port. Life had become intolerable in the city. It was proposed to recall the exiles and have so much peace at least. The leaders of the opposite party took instant alarm, and, as events proved, they had very good reason for going in fear of their lives. They sent secretly to Athens in the summer of 424 B.C. and offered to betray the city. The danger from returning exiles, their own fellow-citizens, was greater than any risk they might run from their own plot.

This was skilfully devised. In the middle of the century the Athenians, then close friends and allies, had built for Megara two parallel long walls connecting the city with Nisaea, at least one mile, possibly three miles, in length.[{433}] If the Athenians now could send a force to take the walls between city and harbour, the Peloponnesian garrison in the latter would be cut off from interfering, and the conspirators promised then to get Megara's gates opened to the landing party.

At nightfall upon a day the Athenian generals, Hippocrates and Demosthenes, arrived at Minoa Island. Only the conspirators knew of their coming. Six hundred hoplites and a force of light-armed troops were disembarked upon the island. In the wall nearest the island and close to the sea there was a gate, just outside of which was a small shrine of the War God Ares, and hard by it was the trench from which the clay for the bricks of the wall had originally been dug. The hoplites under Hippocrates lay in ambush actually in the trench. The light-armed under Demosthenes stole right up to the shrine just outside the gate. Inside the gate were the Peloponnesian sentries on guard, belonging to the Nisaea garrison. The situation may be illustrated thus:




That same evening, there came a waggon down from Megara between the Long Walls to the gate. On it was a sailing dinghy. For many a night past it had come in this way, and, by leave of the commander of the garrison, had been passed through the gate by the sentries, and trundled down the trench to the slip-way on the shore. There the boat had been launched, the conspirators aboard her, and had sailed out into the dark, returning always just before dawn. It was impossible to keep her in the harbour, the crew explained to the Peloponnesian commander, since she would have been seen at once by the Athenians on Minoa. And so every night she went off, as he supposed, “privateering”.

That same evening the dinghy punctually returned, was hauled up the slip, and placed upon the waiting waggon as usual. Slowly it made its way up the trench to the gate under escort of the crew as dawn was breaking. The gate was opened as usual by the guard within. The waggon began to creak its way through and stopped half way. Demosthenes and his men sprang out of the Temple precinct, and rushed for the gate as the crew fell upon the guard and cut them down. Up came Hippocrates and the hoplites running from the trench beyond. The surprise was complete. The Long Walls were taken. Those of the garrison who had sallied out to the rescue fled back into Nisaea fort. And an Athenian army of no fewer than 4000 hoplites and 600 cavalry had marched by Eleusis over the frontier by night and appeared outside the walls of Megara.

So far everything had prospered. It was a very pretty stratagem of war. Major Dalgetty or My Uncle Toby with Corporal Trim could have dilated upon it at length. But now came a check.

An excited crowd gathered at dawn at Megara's city gate opening on the Long Walls. The conspirators in the city insisted that it should be opened. Let us go out at once to battle, they demanded, their faces and limbs all glistening with the oil which should make them known as friends to the Athenians waiting outside to rush within. But at this moment one in their own counsels revealed the plot to the other faction. In a compact body these came surging down upon the gate. It should not be opened, they declared. This was far too risky. The city was in peril. Never a hint gave they that they knew the plot. The wisdom of the fast shut gate was surely obvious by itself. But it was they who stayed on guard, and the gate stayed shut.

The Athenians turned their attention for the moment elsewhere. The whole of that day they spent in wall building. The following day drew near its close and the new wall enclosing the whole circuit of Nisaea fort from sea to sea and cutting across the Long Walls was all but finished. The garrison, deprived of their daily food supply from Megara, thinking too that the city itself was in the enemy's hands, capitulated. The Athenians marched into Nisaea. Only Megara itself now remained.

Upon the Spartan side there is in the entire history of the war just one great soldier hero who outshines the rest, Brasidas, son of Tellis. At Methone in Laconia, on shipboard at the mouth of the Corinthian Gulf and at Corcyra, and in the previous year in his desperate attempt to force a landing in the surf at Pylos, Brasidas in counsel and in action, in enterprise and in personal courage, had done his country noble service. Now he saved Megara.

News of the Athenian capture of the Long Walls reached him when he was between Sicyon and Corinth, some 30 miles away, where he was collecting an army for his expedition to the north, of which the tale will presently be told. On the instant he sent a messenger to the Boeotians bidding them meet him with their army at once at Tripodiscus, seven miles from Megara. To that place he himself hurried with about 3000 troops, and reached it after nightfall of the second day. There the tidings met him that the garrison of Nisaea which he had come to save had surrendered a few hours previously. Without hesitation he pushed on with a picked body of 300 men and was outside the gates of Megara before anyone had heard of his coming. At once he demanded admission.

The Megarians, rent by faction, agreed together on just one point. Most clearly a battle outside their walls was imminent. They would let the victors in. Meanwhile they quite literally sate upon the fence, or rather upon the wall, and peered out cautiously into the dark. Brasidas was baffled. Still in the dead of night, after his march of 30 miles, he returned to his army

resting at Tripodiscus. There at dawn a strong Boeotian force of 2200 hoplites and 600 cavalry joined him. They had heard the news before, and were already mustering in great strength at Plataea (for Megara's danger touched them closely) when his messenger reached them. At once, greatly encouraged, they sent forward their best troops to Tripodiscus as directed. Brasidas now had 6000 good troops under his command.

The Athenian army was in its lines near Nisaea, and its light-armed troops were scattered foraging over the plain when the Boeotian cavalry swept down upon them and chased them helter-skelter to the sea. The Athenian horse, greatly surprised—"for no one had ever before come to the help of Megara"—rode forward to meet the enemy, and there was a short cavalry skirmish. Both cavalries then retired on their infantry. Meanwhile Brasidas had deployed his army in order of battle outside Megara. His cavalry fell back to join him. He waited expectantly.

Hippocrates and Demosthenes were in no mind to fight. In actual numbers they were but a few hundred men weaker than the enemy. In Brasidas' army there was not one single Spartan soldier, apart from the general himself. But the Athenians judged the odds to be altogether too great, and the risk seemed to them greater than the chance of the prize. Nisaea at least was theirs. They were as complacently satisfied with the partial success which they had gained by treachery as are starlings eating stolen bread and butter among the chimney pots. Brasidas for his part made no attempt to force on an engagement. Perhaps he distrusted the quality of his new levies. More probably he desired to keep his army intact for his main objective, the campaign in the north. If incidentally he could save Megara he would rest content with this. So it befel that neither army advanced to the attack. Presently the Athenians withdrew into Nisaea.

Then Megara opened her gates to Brasidas. The incident was closed. The Athenian army went off home, leaving a garrison in Nisaea. Brasidas returned to Corinth. The wiser of the Megarian conspirators slipped quietly away from the city. The exiles were called back from Pagae under the most solemn pledges of a general amnesty. They came into office and held a review of the Megarian army. Out of the ranks they picked man by man one hundred of their personal enemies and of those reputed to be Athenian partisans. Then they summoned the citizen body, compelled them by open voting to condemn the prisoners to death, slew them, and, closest of close oligarchies, ruled Megara contentedly for a round score of years. In the winter of this year they retook their Long Walls and promptly razed them to the ground.[{434}] Nisaea itself, however, was not regained until 409 B.C.[{435}]

Throughout the remainder of the war the Megarians were hostile to Athens at such times as were the Spartans, but the part they played was but a minor one, and ceases to be of any interest. Broken faith between factions involved no nemesis from Heaven.

## CHAPTER VII—BRASIDAS

### *§ 1. Chalcidice*

IT had been Pericles' firm conviction and assurance to his people that the Athenian Empire was invulnerable. Its enemies could attack the Empire only by sea, and Athens was Queen of the seas. The utter failure of the revolt of Lesbos had strengthened the proof. Then a Spartan soldier found another way of attack. Brasidas discovered the "Achilles heel" of the Empire in Chalcidice.

This whole "Thraceward" district lying to the north-east of Athens and on the northern coast of the Aegean had for many years been notoriously disaffected, whether Athens tried to conciliate or to repress its many cities. It was the richest of all the districts of the Empire, contributing at least 30 per cent of the total tribute, besides the profits of trade with the natives of the interior. The key to the district was the city Amphipolis on the Strymon, guarding the only passage of that river. This city the Athenians had finally colonised five years before the outbreak of the great war, in 437 B.C., after many previous doleful failures to get a grip of the place. Its grave defects were two. The population was a very mixed one and by no means attached to the Athenian interest. And it lay a few miles upstream from the coast, so that it could be reached by sea only through its port town Eion. It seems likely that Eion was an open roadstead without harbour or docks.[{436}] If this were so, the nearest station for the Athenian fleet was at the island of Thasos, half a day's sail away.

The three-pronged promontory of Chalcidice, to the south-west of the Strymon valley, was full of Greek cities. Here Athens had two main anxieties. The first was the disaffection of the chief city Potidaea, due to her Corinthian origin and the Corinthian influence in the town. The second was the great amorphous kingdom of Macedon to the north-west of the district. No Philip had yet arisen to make Macedon the greatest military monarchy of the ancient world. The folk were more than half barbarian, and the monarchy was still feeble. But King Perdiccas had some power of annoyance. And though at the outset of the war he was nominally an ally and friend to Athens, he was treacherous by nature, or at least as naturally disliked the Athenian strangle-grip upon his coasts as any Bulgar. Athens could place no reliance upon him for a moment.

Here was tinder enough to catch fire if there came one to apply the spark and to tend the flame when once the fire was started. Potidaea's revolt had blazed up furiously in 432 B.C. It

was extinguished after many weary months of bitter winter weather and heavy losses to the besiegers in men and money. Potidaea surrendered in the winter of 430 B.C., after two and a half years' siege. This had cost Athens quite 2000 talents, some twelve to fourteen times the amount of annual tribute received from the whole Thraceward district.[{437}] The revolt left the whole country disturbed and Perdiccas uneasy. An Athenian army was all but destroyed up country near Spartolus by the natives in June of the year 429 B.C.,[{438}] and a second force met a reverse four years later near Mende.[{439}] King Perdiccas was so moved by the first disaster that he prepared to change sides, and sent secretly 1000 men to help Cnemus in his march on Stratus in 429 B.C., as has been told above.[{440}] But in that same winter a horde of barbarians came down upon him from the east and gave him other things to think about.

**MACEDONIA—CHALCIDICE**




These were the Odrysian Thracians under a king Sitalces. This folk lay in the hinterland of the Aegean northern coast stretching all the many miles from the Strymon to the Bosporus. They were an immense horde of utter barbarians, whose strength and importance Thucydides the historian always overrates. As he had estates of his own on the mainland of Thrace and these barbarians were his neighbours, he was disposed to exaggerate the danger they presented. In the winter of 429 B.C. 150,000 Thracian savages flooded into Macedonia and spent a month roaming up and down the unhappy country. Then all their food gave out and they went back to

their own land with a Macedonian princess as bride to a future king. There was peace now between Perdiccas and Sitalces.{441}

Two years before, at the very outset of the war, the Athenians had chosen to make alliance with Sitalces.{442} Mercenaries from Thrace were useful in their armies, and the alliance might serve also to keep Perdiccas faithful to their interests for very fear. But when the Macedonian king proved treacherous and Sitalces swept down upon him, the Athenians looked on and did nothing. For this inactivity they have been severely censured. Again and again this year 429 B.C. is a story of Athenian feebleness and prostration, the causes of which were obviously the plague and the death of Pericles. But really all this fighting of savages up country in the distant north concerned Athens very remotely. Why should she intervene? And how could she intervene? She has been credited with an "honourable reluctance to use barbarians". This did not deter her from making the alliance at the first. Neither was this sensitiveness apparent many years later when she brought 1300 Thracian savages to Athens to form part of the reinforcements sent to Sicily in 413 B.C. They came too late. They cost a drachma each a day (twice as much as a juryman). Athens could not afford the expense. The Government detailed an officer to take them home by sea. "Do any hurt with them you can on the way", he was ordered. He landed them in Boeotia, and in the early morning led them to the sack of the tiny unprotected little city of Mycalessus. Thucydides tells the story briefly.

> "The Thracians dashed into the town, sacked the houses and the temples, and slaughtered the inhabitants. They spared neither old nor young, but cut down all they met, women, children, the very beasts of burden, every living thing they saw."

There was a boys' school at Mycalessus, "the largest in the city". The children had just begun morning lessons. The "bloody savages" (it is Thucydides' own language) fell upon the school and massacred the boys, every one.

> "No greater calamity ever befel a city: never was anything so sudden or so terrible. Considering the size of the place it was the most lamentable, the most pathetic calamity of the entire war."{443}

Such was Athens' honourable dislike to use her Thracian allies. In every possible way the Athenians, as soon as the war has begun, seem to do their best to forfeit our sympathies. From Mitylene to Melos and Mycalessus—it is a gloomy chain of incidents. And the treatment of the cities of Chalcidice, now to be narrated, does anything but redeem their humanity.

After the Thracian invaders had retired in 429 B.C. there were three or four years of

troubled peace in the north-east. Athens provoked Perdiccas again by encouraging a little trading city Methone on the Thermaic Gulf in its quarrels with the king.{444} Every city in this district of the Empire was restless and fretful. But how could anything be done? Then the news came. A Spartan army was in the neighbourhood!

Perdiccas and the Chalcidian cities had been begging for this. But the difficulties in the way were great. How could an army reach them? Convoy by sea was impossible. On land Thessaly seemed to block the way. For though Thessaly was a land divided against itself, yet the prevailing sympathy among the common folk was for Athens. And, says Thucydides:

> "for an armed force to go through a neighbour's country without his consent was a proceeding which excited jealousy among all Hellenes."{445}

The Spartan Government was so doubtful of the enterprise that they would risk the life of no single Spartan soldier upon it except that of Brasidas, to whom they gave leave to make an attempt. They did this the more readily as they saw a happy means of getting rid thereby of some hundreds of helots. These dangerous serfs were more than ever excited by the events of the year before. Pylos was in their own kinsmen's hands. There might, the ephors feared, be a revolt at any moment. "So they were only too glad to send with Brasidas 700 helots as hoplites."{446} He hired 1000 other hoplites, mostly from the cities of the Isthmus of Corinth, and after saving Megara, as has been narrated, took this tiny force of 1700 men through Boeotia to the little Spartan fort of Heraclea near Thermopylae on the Maliac Gulf. His friends in various Thessalian cities provided guides and escort. In a few days Brasidas "ran through Thessaly"{447} before any force could muster to bar the way. There was one alarming check the very first day on the banks of the upper Enipeus. But Brasidas put off with fair words those who tried to stop him. "He could not possibly go on if they objected", he said. "Would they not go to consult their folk about it?" No sooner had they gone than he led his little force onwards at top speed and reached Pharsalus in the heart of the country that same night. Thence he pushed on and arrived at Dium in Macedonia under Mount Olympus, 100 miles from the Maliac Gulf, before any measures could be taken to stop him. "He was in every way a good man", Thucydides writes succinctly. Long after he was dead, his reputation for honour and ability served Sparta well in attaching Athens' own subject allies to her cause. "Other Spartans will surely be like Brasidas", they said.{448}

The Athenians, hearing the news, contented themselves with declaring war on Perdiccas. {449}

That king, however, had brought the Spartan north and paid for half the army's daily cost for his own purposes. At once he took Brasidas to help him crush a troublesome tribe, the Lyncestae, in the far wilds of the interior, under a chieftain Arrhibaeus. Brasidas went reluctantly. He could not break with Perdiccas. But his heart was elsewhere, with the Greek cities to whom he came to offer "liberty". He patched up a kind of agreement with the chieftain and marched away. Perdiccas was wrathful and cut down his contribution to expenses from one-half to a third.{450}

Then at last Brasidas appeared outside the walls of a Greek city, the subject-ally of Athens. This was Acanthus on the south-west of the Strymonic Gulf, on the neck of the promontory of Acte. He demanded admittance into the town. "How could it be", he indignantly protested, "that they did not welcome him at once within their walls? He had come to redeem Sparta's word of honour," he declared; "Sparta had promised to liberate Hellas from the tyranny of Athens. This, and this alone, was the motive which had impelled her to the war. Acanthus must join in the struggle for liberty. He, Brasidas, was fully able to protect her against any force which Athens could send against her. And Sparta had sworn by the most solemn oaths to respect the autonomy, the right of self-government, of those who joined her."

"Strive to take the lead now in liberating Hellas. Lay up for yourselves a treasure of undying fame. Save your own property. Crown your city with glory."{451}

His eloquence moved the men of Acanthus. So did the fear of losing their vintage. The grapes were nearly ripe. They debated the matter for long hours and voted by ballot. The majority decided on revolt against Athens. They opened the gates and Brasidas marched in. It was his first city. Athens' Empire was vulnerable by land.{452}

Soon, encouraged by their neighbours, Stagirus to the north of Acanthus also revolted from Athens.{453}

Winter drew on apace, the bitter Thracian winter. Snow began to fall. Precious weeks had been wasted in Macedonia. But there were chances for enterprise offered by a black winter night. The greatest prize of all, Amphipolis, lay within reach.

Brasidas marched north, rounding the shore of the Strymonic Gulf. He forded the cold stream flowing from Lake Bolbe to the sea and reached the town of Argilus. The men of Argilus had ever been at bitter feud with the neighbouring greater city of Amphipolis. They received the Spartan army into their walls. That same night they guided Brasidas to his goal,

eight miles away.{454}

### *§ 2. The capture of Amphipolis*

The city of Amphipolis lay on the eastern bank of the Strymon on a rocky hill, round which the river flowed in a semicircle just after its exit from Lake Cercinitis, and between three to four miles from the river mouth at Eion (which also was on the eastern bank). On the river side the hill was so precipitous that stream and crag protected the city without a wall. The city wall, built by Hagnon in 437 B.C., ran across the base of the arc formed by the bend of the river. A bridge crossed the Strymon to the south of the city, forming the approach from Argilus, to which latter town belonged all the country west of the river, including the heights of Mount Cerdylium, which commanded a prospect to Eion and the sea. The modern bridge crosses the Strymon at its exit from the lake, leading to Serres from the hamlet of Neokhori, which occupies a small part of the site of the ancient Amphipolis. The coast road from Salonica to Constantinople crosses the river, here 180 yards broad, by a ferry to the site of Eion. The ancient bridge on the approach from Argilus was some short distance from the city wall, and it was only later that walls were run from the city to the bridge.{455}

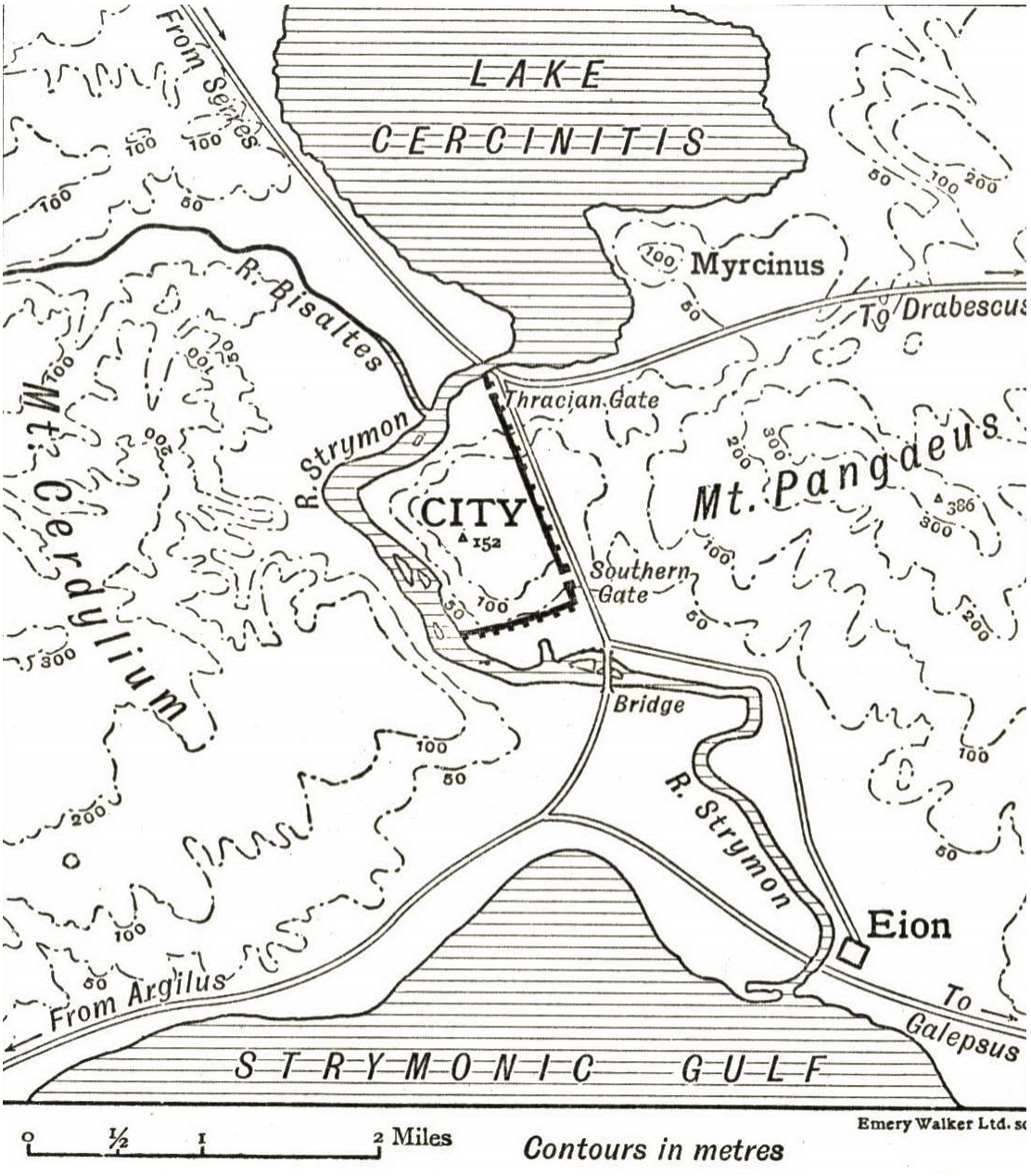
On this winter's night there was in Amphipolis a small Athenian garrison under command of the general Eucles. A second Athenian general lay with a small squadron of seven ships at the island of Thasos, nearly 50 miles away from Eion. This general was the historian Thucydides himself. He was a man of some influence in the neighbourhood, as he had leased from the State (it seems) the working of some goldmines in Mount Pangaeus. Another story is that he took as his bride a lady of the Thracian village Scapte Hyle, who brought her husband gold-mines and estates as her dowry.{456} Neither general was in the least aware of the coming of the Spartan's army. The men of Argilus had seen to it that no news should reach their hated neighbours.

There was a small guard posted at the bridge over the Strymon. In the blackness of the snowy night Brasidas' men rushed it and seized the bridge without difficulty. Crossing the river, they were at once masters of everything outside the city wall. Brasidas did not attempt to storm the latter, trusting that partisans of his within the city would open the gates to him.

But the gates remained shut when day dawned. Eucles sent off an urgent messenger to Thucydides at Thasos, bidding him come with all speed, and meanwhile stood on guard. The messenger reached Thucydides about mid-day. He sailed at once. On arriving at Eion in the evening he found Amphipolis already in the enemy's hands. Brasidas had offered the most

generous terms, which swung the mass of the inhabitants over to his side. Eucles and his small Athenian garrison were disregarded, The city surrendered and Brasidas marched in. At once he made an attack, both by land and water, upon Eion. But Thucydides had by this time arrived and put the town in a state of defence. Brasidas was foiled. He retired to Amphipolis and took all needful measures for the safety of the city. Perdiccas presently arrived to assist him in this. And the three neighbouring towns of Myrcinus, Galepsus, and Oesyme speedily came over to his side.

**AMPHIPOLIS**




So Athens lost Amphipolis and retained Eion.[{457}]

### *§ 3. The banishment of Thucydides*

"For twenty years I was banished from my country after my command at Amphipolis", Thucydides very quietly remarks, later on, in quite another connection.{458} He makes no other reference to this result of Brasidas' capture of the town. There is some later embroidery of the simple fact. That it was Cleon who prosecuted the historian for treachery, or for sloth, carelessness, neglect, is very probable.{459} The length of his exile suggests that a serious view was taken of the matter in Athens, and perhaps this is confirmed by the story that he was recalled by special decree, and not simply as a result of the general amnesty which followed the fall of the "Thirty Tyrants" in 403 B.C. But he may have been recalled by this oligarchy in the previous year.{460} All this is as uncertain as is the place of the plane tree on his Thracian estate under which he wrote his history, according to his most egregious ancient biographer.{461} What is very certain is that his exile gave him the time to collect his materials, the opportunity for learning much of the views of both sides, and the leisure for travel. It is also an ingenious and pleasing suggestion that Oenobius, who proposed the decree for his recall, was the son of his old colleague Eucles.{462} His history was unfinished at the time of his death as an old man aged seventy-five, eight years after his return from exile.{463}

Ought Thucydides to have been at Eion when Brasidas was at least known to be somewhere in the district? Was he therefore rightly made responsible for this most grievous loss of Amphipolis and properly punished? Or was Cleon vindictive and unjust and the Athenian people utterly unreasonable? Ought they not rather to have applauded the energy with which he rushed to the rescue and by his speed saved Eion? Was not one general enough in the town? How could ships lie safely off Eion in winter?{464}

Such questions have been discussed at the most weariful length, until there seems sound sense only in the German Holm's remark: "If it were not a Thucydides who is concerned no one would care to waste one single word on the matter in view of our complete ignorance of all the precise circumstances of the case."{465} The old historian himself utters not one single word of indignation or excuse. It is a glorious reticence. Just two considerations besides do suggest themselves. Whether Thucydides' condemnation for military failure was just or unjust, at least it was, at Athens, anything but extraordinary. His is but one of many examples—far too many examples—of the "over-responsibility of the Athenian executive". It is the one utterly fatal blemish in the Athenian democracy.

Julius Beloch remarks, very justly, that "such trials were far too frequent at Athens and

could at the best serve only to shatter the confidence of the troops in their officers. The practice was certain quickly enough to revenge itself."{466} This is absolutely true. Punishment follows punishment. The civilian demagogue, the noisy crowded stupid law court, show no mercy. A Demosthenes does not come back to Athens. A Thucydides is banished. A Nicias will not bring his army home safely while he still may, for fear of the anger of the people. An Alcibiades is deprived of his command when he is his city's last one remaining hope. The justice of each individual sentence can be argued. The cumulative effect of the whole number is overwhelming. It is just a case where the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. If ever a democracy deserved ruin for its treatment of its own servants, Athens was that democracy. "Thucydides was driven into exile; it was a fate which usually happened to all the best men at Athens", Cicero drily remarks.{467}

One other reflection may be permitted, however obvious. Cleon, if we accept the story, drove Thucydides into exile. It is therefore Cleon to whom we, in a manner, owe the history written by Thucydides. All may (or may not) commend Cleon at least for this. But had even Cleon known——.

### *§ 4. The end of Brasidas and Cleon*

After the fall of Amphipolis matters went rapidly from bad to worse for Athenian interests in Chalcidice. From the Strymon Brasidas turned west again. Winter made no difference to this one Spartan soldier, and his fame had spread far and wide. Men began to be foolishly contemptuous of Athens and forgetful of her power. Brasidas himself was under no such illusion. He sent home asking for reinforcements. The jealous and short-sighted Spartan Government refused his request. Its one desire now was to make peace. In no other way could the handful of prisoners in captivity at Athens be brought safe home again.{468}

The promontory of Acte was full of small cities, inhabited by Greek-speaking barbarians. On the appearance of Brasidas and his army many joined him. Sane, on Xerxes' Canal, and Dium to the south of it, refused to do so. After ravaging their lands he marched down against the important Greek city of Torone, near the point of the next peninsula, Sithonia. With the aid of confederates within its walls he surprised and rushed the town. The Athenian garrison took refuge in its citadel, called Lekythus. Its battlements were in poor repair, and Brasidas stormed it. A wooden tower erected by the defenders was top-heavy and came crashing down at the very crisis of the assault. The Spartan general had offered thirty minae—a large sum—as

reward to the first soldier to scale the wall of the fortress. He awarded it to the local Goddess Athena for her help in overthrowing the tower. What the troops thought of this award is unhappily not recorded.{469}

Spring was at hand, the spring of 423 B.C. The belligerents concluded a general armistice for one year. Both sides were in fact thoroughly weary of the whole war, which had caused loss, failure, disappointment, and led to no conclusive result. To Athens, Cythera and Nisaea were poor compensations for her many recent reverses. Sparta's thoughts were concentrated on the recovery of the prisoners of Sphacteria. In both cities men hoped that negotiations during the year's truce would issue in a conclusive and a lasting peace. At any rate, men in Athens sensibly reflected, should war be resumed, the year's interval would give them time to make preparations to recover the lost ground in the north-east, where Brasidas had caught them all unawares and off their guard. It was imperative at once to stop his raging through the country. Men in Sparta did not reflect sensibly at all.

The "Truce of Laches" for one year was concluded in the early spring of 423 B.C.{470}

On the south coast of Pallene, the westernmost of the three promontories of Chalcidice, there lay two rich and important Greek cities, subjects of the Athenian Empire—Scione and Mende. So long as an Athenian garrison held Potidaea at the narrow neck of the peninsula, no enemy force could possibly reach the two cities by land, and Athens held them in the hollow of her hand. Regardless of the peril, Scione revolted. Brasidas crossed there by sea from Torone, congratulated the townsfolk on their pluck and spirit, and was himself fêted enthusiastically as the champion of Greek liberty. The sea being, for the moment, clear of Athenian ships, he returned to Torone and quickly brought his army back with him to Scione. Mende and Potidaea itself were the next items on his programme. He had friends in both cities.{471}

But now there arrived at Scione two envoys—one from Sparta, one from Athens—who were travelling together round the district to make official proclamation of the year's armistice. There was a hurried calculation of dates. It was found that Scione had revolted two days after the signing of the truce. All the other allies of Sparta accepted the truce, and Brasidas himself sent his army voyaging back to Torone again. But the Athenian envoy declared that Scione still belonged to Athens, and was thus excluded from the armistice. So far as Sparta was concerned, Athens was free to deal with the rebel as she pleased without interference.

Brasidas hotly disputed the calculation of dates. The matter was at once referred to the home Governments. One of the terms of the truce had been that all disputed points should be decided by arbitration and not by arms. Sparta therefore suggested arbitration. The Athenian people absolutely refused. The dates were beyond all question right. Their wrath with Scione knew no bounds. There was the usual see-saw in politics. Nicias had signed the truce for Athens. Now Cleon seized the chance. He instantly moved and carried in the Assembly a decree that Scione should be destroyed and the whole of the citizens put to the sword. The armistice should hold good in every other quarter of the Greek world. But the Athenians began to equip a powerful expedition against Scione.{472}

At this juncture Mende also revolted. Brasidas' partisans in the town were fearful of detection when the Athenians came, and his stout defence of Scione had greatly encouraged them. Surely he would never desert them. So they brought their town over to him, the majority of the citizens vainly and feebly protesting.

Brasidas accepted the town. This was a glaring violation of the truce. There was no disputing about dates in Mende's case. Though he raked up some trivial charges against Athens of infringing the terms of truce, this excused nothing and deceived nobody. The Athenians at home, "more angry than ever", added Mende to the objects of the coming expedition.{473}

Brasidas, on his side, removed the women and children of both cities away to safety at Olynthus, north of Potidaea, and sent troops, 500 of his own hoplites and 300 Chalcidian targeteers, to help defend the cities. And then (a military mystery almost beyond all comprehension) he vanished with the greater part of his army in the dim interior of Macedonia. Perdiccas took his ally off again against the troublesome Lyncestae once more. No doubt the king thought that it was high time he himself got some value for his money, and Arrhibaeus rankled. But Brasidas! No doubt he hoped and intended to be back at Pallene in time. In this he had made his one and only blunder. Entangled in the intricacies of "north-west-frontier" fighting, he did indeed extricate his little army with the greatest tactical skill from the wild valley into which he had been ensnared. But it was deep summer before he and his weary troops came back again to Torone, leaving behind them a triumphant Arrhibaeus and an angry Macedonian king{474} On their arrival they found Mende already in Athenian hands again. Cleon had carried the decree of vengeance. But it was the "peace-generals", Nicias and Nicostratus, to whom its execution was entrusted. They had sailed to Potidaea, and thence proceeded against Mende by land and sea. There was some hard fighting before faction within the walls

opened the gates to the Athenians. These now marched on Scione. Brasidas had to look on helplessly while Nicias drew lines of investment closely round the city. Then Perdiccas stabbed his Spartan ally in the back. The king made friends again with Athens, and, sending to Thessaly, effectively barred the way to a Peloponnesian army which by this time had actually been mustered in the south to march to Brasidas' reinforcement. Half a dozen Spartans only reached the general at Torone. Two of the younger of these he appointed as governors, Clearidas to Amphipolis, Pasitelidas to Torone. His promise of "autonomy" to the cities was forgotten in the grave emergency of the military situation.{475}

The winter passed away and spring drew near when Athens would make new efforts. Potidaea was the key to the situation. The open beach at Scione was no good station for a blockading force or the landing of supplies. If Brasidas could take Potidaea he would reduce the Athenians to these straits, and, marching down Pallene, could threaten the investing lines from the hills to the north of the town. The Spanish troops clinging by the eyelids to the cliffs of Alhucemas Bay suggest the uncomfortable position in which the Athenians at Scione might have found themselves. But Potidaea was strongly held and closely guarded. The sole chance was surprise by night. Brasidas marched from Torone on the enterprise. A storming ladder was already in position when the alarm was given. He withdrew his army before daybreak. There was no help now by which he could save Scione.{476}

Spring came. The armistice expired. No peace had been concluded. But all men's eyes were fixed on the struggle in the north, and there was no other fighting.

Cleon grew impatient. What he had done at Pylos, bringing triumph out of procrastination and blockade, he could do again. He prayed the people to give him the command. They gave it him. This time he had no Demosthenes at the scene of war. His cheerful confidence in his own military skill was not shared by the army. They followed him, it is said, unwillingly.{477} But they had no choice.

With 30 ships, 1200 Athenian hoplites and 300 of their cavalry, and many allies Cleon sailed for Thrace. Touching only at Scione to pick up some of the troops from the investing force, he crossed the gulf to a harbour near Torone. The joyful news there was brought him by deserters that Brasidas himself was at the moment not in the town, and that the garrison was weak. He attacked at once at two points simultaneously and carried the town. Brasidas, hastening to the rescue, was four miles away when the city fell. The women and children were enslaved, the men sent prisoners to Athens, including the Spartan commandant Pasitelidas.{478}

There remained Amphipolis. Scione in Cleon's eyes was but a minor matter. Could he not repeat on the Strymon his first notable success, the capture of Torone? He sailed to Eion. From it he sent to Perdiccas and to the king of the Odrysian Thracians demanding an army from the one and barbarian mercenaries from the other. Meanwhile he was active. He attacked Stagirus. In this enterprise he failed. He could not waste much time or thought upon Stagirus. He consoled himself by storming Galepsus. Then he returned to Eion and waited for the reinforcements. His self-confidence was unabated, but he intended to surround and storm Amphipolis and judged that his present force was not strong enough for this.[{479}] But his Athenians, all of them picked troops, began to grumble in disgust. So this was Cleon! They wanted to be done with the affair and back home again. Brasidas was not a lazy coward like their own general, they said. Cleon judged it best to employ them on a reconnaissance in force. He neither expected nor at the moment desired battle. "We will go and look at the place," he told his cantankerous army. He marched them northwards along the road which, as it reached the city, ran along the top of a ridge just outside the city wall. From it a great part of the interior of the city was visible though not the portion immediately behind the wall. As the long Athenian column marched along the ridge Cleon gazed down upon the city. All seemed quiet and deserted. It was a sore pity, he reflected, that he had not brought his siege engines up with him from Eion. He could have taken the place that morning had he done so. Brasidas and his army could not be in it. The general moved forward to the head of the column just where it reached the top of the pass. Here the road ran down to the river, and a far prospect stretched away over the waters of Lake Cercinitis to the north. He halted his men along the road and stood enjoying the view. The quiet city wall lay on his left hand, its gates fast shut. There were two of these, the "Thracian Gate" at the north-east angle, opening out on the road to Drabescus, and another to the south of it opposite the centre of the Athenian line as it stood halted, now formed up to front the wall.

A scout came hurrying up to Cleon. The whole of the enemy's army, he reported, was now visible in the city. He had seen many feet of men and horses at bottom of the gate, as if about to sally out. The general turned and hastened to see for himself. Yes—there were undoubtedly the feet. He determined that he still had time to withdraw to Eion, and sent orders to the rear of the column to retire by the left down the road southwards. To his impatience and anxiety they seemed to move too slowly. He turned the rest of his army promptly to the left and began to march them off also, pressing impetuously upon the heels of his retreating vanguard. Brasidas had been watching Cleon's every movement. From his outpost station on top of Mount

Cerdylion over the river he had seen the army leave Eion and march north. He had hurried back into the city and resolved upon a sally in force. Cleon had given him the chance which seemed almost beyond praying for. He knew that at the moment their armies were practically equal in numbers. But he distrusted the quality of his own men. These picked soldiers of Athens might be the better of his own very mixed troops in pitched battle. And Cleon was expecting reinforcements also. But now, before these came, he had delivered himself into the Spartan's hand. The latter had time for a brief offering of sacrifice, surely too of thanksgiving, to Athena. Then he told his men his plan. The army divided under cover of the wall.

The Athenian line was in motion, moving slowly and in some confusion to the south. "See the heads and spears trembling," whispered Brasidas fiercely to his men. "They will run, they will run in a moment." Slowly the enemy's column deployed to the left, exposing every soldier's unguarded right side to the waiting garrison. Brasidas gave the word. The southern gate of the city was flung open, and he himself, with 150 picked men, charged at full speed up the slope to the road and hurled himself upon the Athenian centre. The Athenian van fled precipitately southwards out of harm's way. The centre in the confusion of its retreat gave ground, and scattered in flight to the hills behind it. Brasidas himself at once led his little force against the enemy on his left. He fell desperately wounded and was carried back into the city.

At that moment the great bulk of the garrison under command of Clearidas sallied out of the Thracian Gate and fell upon the rear of the Athenian column. Cleon fled at once, was pursued, and cut down. But his men stood firm. Twice, three times, they repulsed the charge of the heavy infantry. Then Clearidas let loose upon them his few hundred cavalry and all his targeteers. Showers of darts fell upon the Athenians. Then they too broke and fled over the hills to Eion. In the battle and the pursuit the Athenians had lost 600 men, besides their general.[{480}]

The garrison lost just seven men. But one of them was Brasidas. They had better have lost the city. Like Wolfe, the Spartan fell in the moment of victory. Like Wolfe, he lived long enough to know the victory was won. They buried him in Amphipolis, the whole army following him in full military array to his grave. His sepulchre became a shrine and he himself the Hero to whom sacrifice was offered, in whose honour yearly games were held. He had given a new birth of liberty to Amphipolis, and the city was rededicated to Brasidas its founder. Hagnon, Athenian and enemy, must be forgotten and any memorial of him in the town destroyed forever. [{481}]

Cleon's body lay upon the cold hillside. His name became a mockery and a jest for

comedians in his city.

The defeated army sailed home from Eion. “Brasidas’ men” kept together as a unit, presently to do service on a distant battlefield again. Next year came peace. In its terms Sparta bargained for her own troops and any more of “Brasidas’ men” beleaguered in Scione. The citizens themselves she callously left to their doom. He who would have once again pleaded their cause and that of Sparta’s honour lay dead. In the summer of 421 B.C. the Athenians took Scione, slew every man, and enslaved the women and children. They gave the desolate site to the exiles from Plataea to dwell in.{482} It were hard indeed to justify such vile betrayal by the friend, such fiendish cruelty, despite all “poetic justice”, by the foe.

### *§ 5. The temporary peace*

Brasidas and Cleon were dead. Peace was at last genuinely possible. The two men who now counted most were earnestly anxious for it. Nicias of Athens had done good service to his city in the ten years of the war, but he had always hated the war, and, old age creeping on apace, became more and more passionately eager for peace. King Pleistoanax of Sparta had but recently returned to his throne after nineteen years in exile. But men still looked askance at him. He had bribed the Delphic Oracle, they said, to induce the Spartans to recall him. Whenever any misfortune happened, there were whispers of sacrilege and corruption. The king sagely reflected that misfortunes were more likely to occur in war than in peace.{483}

Both men found plenty of support in their cities. At Sparta the war had disappointed expectations terribly. Sphacteria was such a blow as had never before in the long history of the city been experienced. The Peloponnese was threatened continually, on the south from Cythera, on the west from Pylos. The helots were daily deserting in large numbers, and the fidelity of the remainder was more than suspect. Secret murder and treacherous assassination of leading helots, however useful a practice in the training of boy Spartans, were no very sure guarantee against a general helot rising. The Spartan prisoners were still in Athens’ keeping. And perhaps the most important consideration of all was the fact that the Thirty Years’ Peace with Argos was on the point of expiring. Argos, unlike her great rival, had suffered nothing from the war. She was fresh, strong, vigorous, thanks to her neutrality. She could never forgo her claim, her ancient traditional claim, to leadership in the Peloponnese. As the minimum price for continued peace she was likely to demand the surrender of the debatable frontier territory, Cynuria, now in Sparta’s possession. Only if Sparta were finally rid of this wasting war with

Athens could she withstand such impudent demands and defy Argos with complete confidence. Sparta was eager for peace.

Athens was no less weary of the war, though she had fewer urgent reasons for immediate peace, now that there was no Brasidas to command against her in Chalcidice. But Amphipolis was still in the enemy's hands. Delium had been a shattering blow, as also had been Cleon's rout, to her estimate of her own military excellence. There was no more luck in which to trust. The fear of revolt within the Empire grew more lively as year followed year. All her operations seemed doomed now to end in disaster. The Radical Democracy, says Beloch, had lost its leader, and the war policy by this time was thoroughly discredited.{484} Athens was more than willing for peace.

The Spartans summoned a meeting of all the members of the Peloponnesian Confederacy. The majority decided to open negotiations for peace with Athens—Boeotia, Corinth, Elis, and Megara vainly dissenting. In the early days of April 421 B.C. there was concluded a peace between Sparta and Athens, including their respective allies, which was to be for fifty years and is usually called the Peace of Nicias. Both sides were to surrender all prisoners of war. Athens was further to hand over Pylos, Cythera, Methana, and one or two other little places. Sparta was to give back Amphipolis and Panactum. But Athens was to retain Nisaea since Boeotia retained Plataea. Some special terms were concluded concerning a few of the cities of Chalcidice of no great importance. The Peace was quickly followed by a definite alliance between Sparta and Athens, each city pledging its help to the other in case either of attack from outside or a revolt of her slaves.{485} It was just such a peace as Pericles himself might joyfully have concluded.

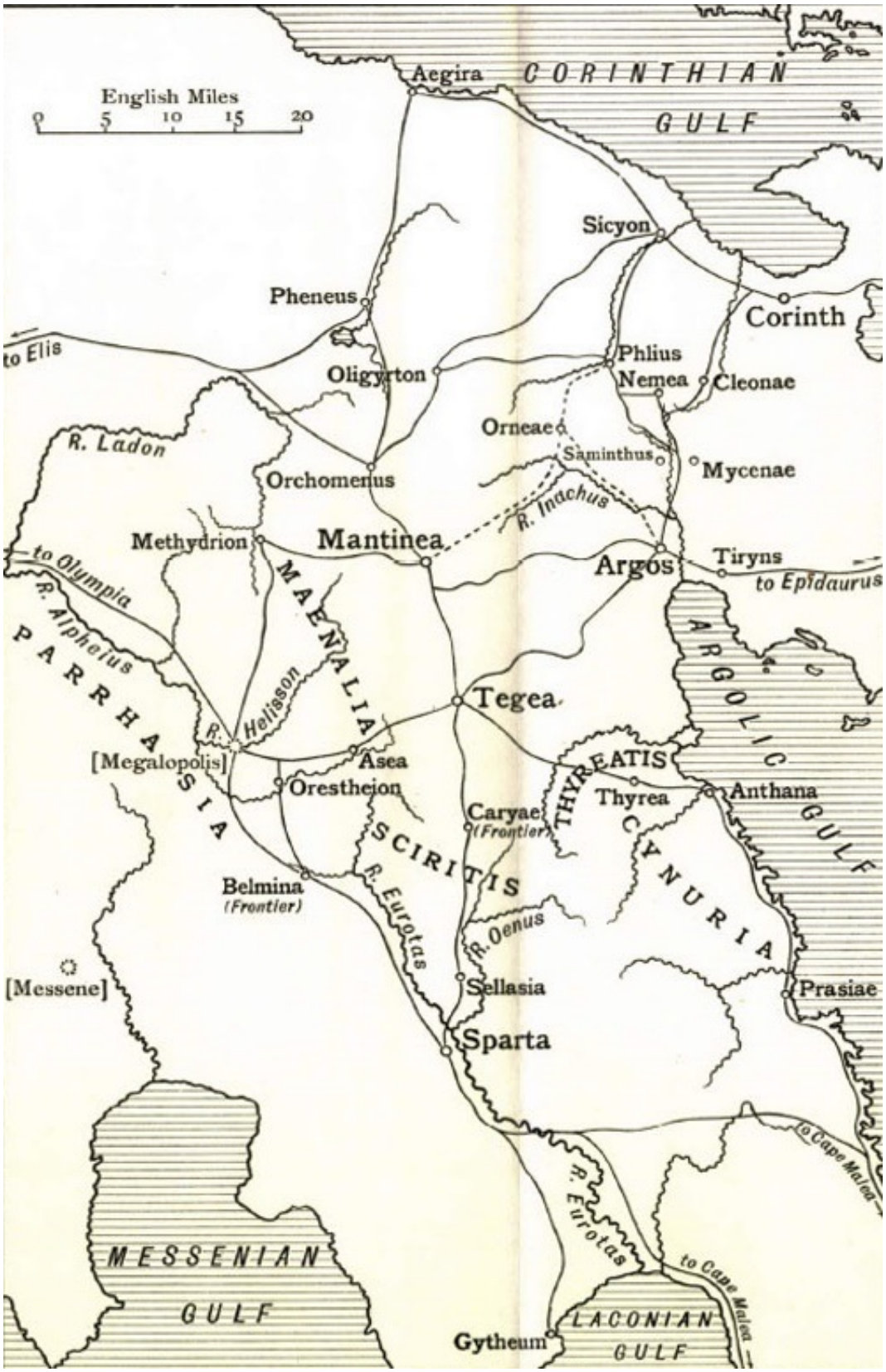
Two elements of insecurity in the Fifty Years' Peace very quickly became manifest.

Many states openly refused to agree to it, Corinth and Megara, who gained no compensation for their losses, Boeotia, Elis, and the cities of Chalcidice. And the terms of peace were not carried out. Sparta was mainly to blame for this. She failed to secure the surrender of Amphipolis to Athens, feebly protesting that she had done all she could in the matter when she withdrew her garrison from the town. Athens, therefore, in retaliation retained Pylos and Cythera and began bitterly to regret that she had already handed over the prisoners of Sphacteria. And the Boeotians quite flatly refused to give Panactum back.

There followed many months of recrimination and of confused political intrigues between

the various cities, “a greater degree of complication in the grouping and association of the Grecian cities than had ever before been known”.[{486}] Of all the alliances made or schemed two only were in the upshot based upon genuine friendship or community of interest, that between Sparta and Boeotia in the winter of 421 B.C. and the “Democratic League” of Athens, Argos, Elis, and Mantinea, formed in July 420 B.C. The first of these was most ominous of all to the prospects of the new-made peace. It demonstrated the obvious existence at Sparta of a new “War party” of ever-increasing influence. The manœuvrings for alliances were subtle and many. Argos found herself, now the centre of attraction, now in some imminent risk of being isolated in a ring of foes. Nicias and his friends at Athens still clung desperately like honest men to the hope of peace. It has been said recently concerning the “Pact” that the very signing of it might be the greatest help towards the securing of the objects which it pursues. “Sometimes the written word may help to create the spirit which it prematurely expresses.”[{487}] If something like this had been Nicias’ hope, he must have been grievously disappointed. Everywhere in Greece men’s spirit seemed to grow more and more bellicose. The war had settled nothing; the peace seemed more and more precarious. For six years and ten months Sparta and Athens refrained from direct attack one on the other’s country. But Spartans were fighting Athenians on the field of battle in the fourth year of the peace. That in this battle Athens was fighting on Argos’ side, and that for Sparta everything was risked on one single throw as never before were results due to the political foresight and genius of one single Athenian, Alcibiades, the most brilliant, the most perplexing, and the most mishandled of all Athenian statesmen.

**THE EASTERN PELOPONNESE**



## CHAPTER VIII—ALCIBIADES

### *§ 1. The new leader*

ALCIBIADES belonged to one of the leading family clans in Athens, that of the Alcmaeonidae. He was born about the year 450 B.C. His father was killed fighting against the Boeotians at Coronea when the boy was a child of three or four years. Pericles, of the same clan, became his guardian, and when he grew to young manhood Socrates the philosopher was his friend.

He was a handsome, turbulent, and self-willed boy, an extravagant, pleasure-loving, and athletic youth. The tales told about his younger days are many, though Thucydides will not admit him to his narrative until he is thirty years of age just after the Peace of Nicias, when he was "influential by reason of his noble birth, although he would have been thought too young for politics in any other city".{488} But long before this, as boy and youth, he had been well known in the streets of Athens, and later generations treasured up the stories of the wilful, impetuous boy and the reckless, generous young aristocrat.

One day as a child he was playing at dice with other boys in the street. A heavy dray came up and he called to the driver to stop. The man drove right on and the other boys scattered. Alcibiades flung himself flat on the ground in the face of the waggon. "Go ahead then," he cried, "drive on." The man pulled his team hard back just in time, as the boy's scared playmates ran forward shouting.

Another day he was wrestling with a comrade and getting the worst of the match. To prevent his being thrown, in a fury he bit the other boy's hand, who promptly released his grasp. "You bite", he said angrily, "like a woman." "No," said Alcibiades, "like a lion."

At school he was obedient to all his other teachers, but he flatly refused when his music-master set him to learn the flute. "It isn't fit for a gentleman," he protested. "Look at a fellow's grimaces playing the flute. His own chums wouldn't recognise him. The harp is quite another matter. How can you talk, too, when you are flute-playing? Leave flutes to Theban boys. They can't talk if they want to." The boy was a hero among his school-fellows, and flute-playing promptly went out of fashion.

He had a magnificent dog which had cost a small fortune. One day the animal was seen running about the streets with its tail docked. "Everyone is cursing you because of the dog," his

comrades told him. “Just what I wanted,” he answered laughing. “Let them jabber about this, and so not have anything worse to say about me.”

Another day when he was a youth he caught sight of a rich, noble, and respected old citizen, Hipponicus by name, who was walking in the way. “You dare not,” said his comrades, when he whispered to them, pointing across the street. The lad strolled laughing up to his elder and smote him a buffet, in pure freakish delight. Athens rang with the insult. Everyone was naturally furious. Early next morning there came a knock at Hipponicus’ door. The lad came in, flung his robe off, and, presenting his naked body, “Now then, flog away!” he cried. The old noble forgave him on the spot, and presently gave him his daughter for wife.

Later on she quarrelled with her husband and came indignantly herself, as the law bade, to claim a divorce. As she entered the magistrate’s court Alcibiades swooped down on her and carried her off in his arms through the crowded market-place home. And they lived happily ever afterwards, that is until her death, “which soon befell”.{489}

His wealth was very great: his expenditure enormous. At the “International Games” at Olympia, probably those of 416 B.C.,{490} he entered as many as seven chariots, winning three prizes. Even Thucydides tells this event, for it was a political matter of some consequence. Nicias himself taunted him publicly with his love of horse-racing, his magnificent stud, his passion for extravagant display. “Youngsters of this stamp”, he cried, “impoverish themselves and harm the State.” “See what I did,” Alcibiades retorted hotly. “I sent into the arena seven chariots—no other private man ever did the like. I won the first, second, and fourth prizes—with what result? I, an Athenian, was my city’s representative. Men came to Olympia believing her exhausted by the war. They were amazed and believed us more powerful than even we are, when they saw what one single man could do. My display was an honour to myself, and to my forefathers, yes, but also it was a solid gain to my country. Is there not some use in the folly of a man who at his own cost benefits not himself alone but also the State?” Victory at Olympia in the curious world of ancient Greece meant much, not to the victor only, but also and always to the victor’s city. Nicias was sorely worsted in the argument.{491}

Ambition, it is said, was Alcibiades’ master passion. He dazzled the imagination of his fellow-citizens and delighted their eyes. Then the sober burghers went home and gravely shook their heads. Such a brilliant aristocrat was not to be trusted. “And it was this suspicion”, says Thucydides plainly, “which later on did more than anything else to cast the city down. His talents as a military commander were unrivalled. But men disliked his wild self-indulgence;

they thought he was aiming at a tyranny. Because they objected on moral grounds to his private life, they handed over the command to others; and so they speedily shipwrecked the city."[{492}]

"*They*", and not "*he*". For Alcibiades wished to be first in the democracy. Once at least, in 408 B.C.,[{493}] possibly twice, he had the chance of "seizing the tyranny" and ruling Athens with more than the glory of a Sicilian or Florentine despot. Of set choice he let the opportunity go by. He was attacked by parties and by rival politicians both on right and left. Nicias and the respectable Conservatives loathed and dreaded him, and hated his policy of opposition in every way and always to Sparta. The extreme Radical "Left" and its jealous leaders were far more crafty and malignant foes to him. What room was there in the State for a good honest demagogue, a manual worker, a labour leader, a self-made man, when this glorious and wealthy aristocrat proved himself the finest orator and the best general in the entire city? Then there were deadly family feuds, men of rival clans, with traditions of hatred for the Alcmaeonidae handed resentfully down from father to son. This was the treacherous turbulent sea over which Alcibiades must sail gallantly in his quest for leadership. And it engulfed him, and, with him, his city sank.

The "comic poets" of his day treated him with curious reserve, with the one exception, it seems, of Eupolis, who devoted an entire comedy, the *Baptai* (Fops), to him and his evil life. Fate has dealt hardly with Eupolis, and his comedy is lost.[{494}] But apart from Eupolis, the playwrights contented themselves with obvious and harmless jests concerning Alcibiades' manners and morals, poking special fun at his famous and attractive lisp. Yet, as a clever French writer remarks,[{495}] "no man might seem less in harmony with the Conservative temper", and it was this temper which animated the "Comic dramatists" of Athens. His political enemies in ancient times and many a writer since have credited him with a passion for intrigue and an undying love for crooked ways. Of all his critics it is the English historian Grote who discharges the heaviest artillery against him and never misses an opportunity for onslaught. For on no other terms can the Englishman hope to save his pet Athenian democracy from conviction for folly, ingratitude, and injustice. Grote, whose defence of a Cleon, even of a Cleophon, is masterly, cannot restrain himself when he comes to mention a greater man. The historian's sense of fairness, even of the value of evidence, leaps overboard at once.[{496}]

Alcibiades in fact is a type of character than which no other could be more abhorrent to the sober and moral Radical Parliamentarian of the early Victorian era. But others will admit that despite his reckless ways and his sins against the State, which were many, Alcibiades did

service to his city equalled by no other man since the death of Pericles, and would yet have brought her victorious out of the furnace of the war, had he been permitted by his political enemies. His service was but ill requited. Party Faction was the cause of the "fall of Athens". This is the final and mature judgment of Thucydides himself.{497} The whole career of Alcibiades is its explanation.

### *§ 2. Alcibiades' Argive policy*

When the war broke out Alcibiades, then some twenty years of age, in spite of all his love of racing, games, and pleasure, went at once to the front. He was in the trenches outside Potidaea, where he was severely wounded. At Delium he served in the cavalry. It was the Peace of Nicias which first brought him to the fore as a politician.

He utterly mistrusted the peace, and he hated Sparta with a deadly hatred. Men said this was due to pique. There had been old close official ties of friendship between his family and the Spartans which his grandfather had renounced. The grandson hoped to renew these in time, when peace came, and with this object in view had paid much kindly attention to the unlucky Spartan captives at Athens, brought there from Sphacteria. But in the peace negotiations the Spartan Government had passed him completely by and chosen rather to employ the more helpful and sincere good offices of the older and more influential Nicias. Alcibiades, they said, was too young. In a fit of temper, and envious of Nicias, Alcibiades flung himself into the opposite camp.{498}

But to personal motives there was added real political insight, when once the peace was made. Alcibiades was convinced from the first that it could never last. Everything speedily proved him only too likely to be right. Nicias the peacemaker would not and could not believe it. The hostility and bad faith of the Peloponnesian States became every day more manifest. Nicias shut his eyes to facts. Alcibiades was clear-sighted.

War was bound to come again. What then could Athens do? The young statesman saw at once that in an alliance with Argos, now at last free to act, lay such a weapon against Sparta both of offence and of defence as his city had not had to wield for thirty years. Cleon himself had bequeathed the idea to him. Already in 425 B.C. that statesman had paid a visit to Argos, seeking to revive that city's ancient friendship with Athens, exploring tentatively the chances of an alliance when her peace with Sparta should, four years later, expire.{499} Now Alcibiades saw that the chance at last was come. What a chance it was! With an Argive army waiting on

flank of the line of march no Spartan army dared advance to cross the Isthmus of Corinth into Attica. And with stout allies to help them the Argives might be more than a match for even the Spartans in the field. Attica would be untouched and Sparta compelled to fight for her very existence at home. Alliance with Argos was Athens' great new hope. If war *was* bound to come again, Alcibiades' "Argive policy" was a masterpiece alike of statesmanship and of strategy.

He secured the alliance by a finesse which has been hotly and unreasonably denounced as a "discreditable trick". Thucydides and Plutarch between them tell the whole story at great length.{500} All was on the point of being lost. Sparta's alliance with Boeotia had terrified Argos, who felt herself isolated. Very reluctantly she herself opened negotiations with Sparta. Then Alcibiades sent privately to her, urging her to apply to Athens. "Let Argive envoys come," he wrote, "with others from Mantinea and Elis (States which then were evilly disposed to Sparta) and invite Athens to enter their joint alliance. Now is the time. I will do my utmost to help." The Argives were delighted. Though their own ambassadors were at Sparta at the moment, they sent others to Athens to negotiate an alliance.

But with them came three Spartan envoys, sent off in hot haste and some consternation by the Spartan Government. Argos was every bit as valuable to Sparta, if it came again to war, as she was to Athens, and for exactly the same strategical reasons. The Spartan envoys came as plenipotentiaries, with full powers to treat concerning the complaints about the peace and its carrying-out which the Athenians were, very justly, making. On their arrival they came before the Council and told this to the Councillors. Alcibiades was alarmed. If they told this also to the Athenian people in Assembly next day, there was an end of all his own hopes and plans. The peace-party of Nicias and his friends was still all powerful. The relief from war was still a recent blessing. Who in Athens would not welcome a real chance of settling all outstanding differences between Sparta and Athens once and for all?

Alcibiades invited the three envoys to visit him that evening. He was an important statesman and they came. He warned them as a sincere friend not to be precipitate. Sparta wanted Pylos back particularly, he understood. Let them trust him to persuade the people himself. They were strange to Athens, he believed. They would find the Assembly a very different proposition from the Council. It was altogether fitting and very wise of them to have told the Council of their powers. The Council was always candid itself and liked others to be candid. But the Assembly! He was bound to say that the Assembly was both proud and very grasping. If his

friends from Sparta just blurted out that they had full powers, what kind of a bargain could they possibly hope to make? He, at least, he regretted to say, would feel bound in this case openly to oppose them, and he had some small influence with the people. Far better for them to hold their tongues for a while and trust him, their very good friend, to arrange things quietly for them.

The three Spartans, men of an almost incredible simplicity, fell into the trap. They believed in the Athenian politician's promise to assist them, which, moreover, he obligingly confirmed solemnly by an oath, and they went home to bed. Poor unlettered men, they knew nothing of Euripides the poet and his famous tragic line in defence of lying with which he shocked the moral sense of the entire Greek world from Aristophanes' day to that of Origen:

> "'Twas but my tongue, 'twas not my mind that swore."

Next day they came into the Assembly, that huge concourse of people. Alcibiades rose at once. "Had their friends from Sparta come with full powers to treat?" he asked sweetly.

"No, not *full* powers," they replied.

Alcibiades sprang to his feet.

"*This* then was Spartan honesty," he stormed, "*this* was Spartan good faith. Prevaricators, shufflers—saying one thing one day, and its opposite the next! Rotten in action, rotten in speech! Who could have dealings with such men?"

The torrent of his angry eloquence beat about the envoys' ears. They were dazed and stunned by his furious vituperation. The Councillors, all of them, were equally and more honestly wrathful. Nicias sat still, dismayed, perplexed, confounded. The people rose in their fury.

"Have in the Argives!" they cried.

The President rose to take the final vote upon the proposal of alliance with Argos. Suddenly there was an earthquake.

The Assembly at once broke up with some rapidity and hurried off home. Nicias had a welcome respite. Alcibiades was chagrined. He had not calculated on an earthquake. All was not lost. No man at least would believe the three Spartans again, whatever they said. But perhaps he ought not actually to have taken that oath.

Everything indeed was gained. Next day the Assembly met again. Nicias induced the people to postpone the question of the Argive alliance and to send him with others on an embassage to Sparta, to present their reasonable and irreducible demands, chief of them that Sparta must renounce her alliance with Boeotia, unless Boeotia would herself come into the general peace. Nicias failed hopelessly in his mission. On his return, Alcibiades proudly introduced the envoys from Argos. This time there was no earthquake, and in July 420 B.C. the Quadruple Alliance of Athens, Argos, Elis, and Mantinea was very solemnly concluded. Alcibiades' trick had secured the delay necessary. But the Quadruple Alliance was in fact due to the imperative needs of the allies in face of Sparta's increasing unfriendliness. Even the most laborious and heavy of all the many German historians of Greece, Georg Busolt, is exhilarated into calling "Der Demokratische Vierbund" a "brilliant example of Alcibiades' political talent".{501}

Unlike certain predecessors, this Alliance was, in fact, a genuine one, based on common sentiment as well as fortified by a common danger. In it political creed was stronger than the old familiar tie of blood. Dorian Argos, Arcadian Mantinea, Dorian Elis, Ionian Athens, all were linked together by their firm belief in the principles of democracy. Two elements of weakness there were in it none the less. The four allies had different objects in view. Elis was concerned with a border town, Lepreon, whose independence Sparta was upholding.{502} Mantinea, as always, was more than ever hopeful of using the alliance to crush her southern neighbour Tegea. Theirs is the most petty and the most persistent feud in the whole of Greece. One other risk remained. One party in Athens had concluded the alliance with Argos and elected its champion Alcibiades as general for the coming year, 419 B.C. But what guarantee was there against Nicias regaining his old position in the politics of that most fickle and light-witted of all Greek peoples, the Athenians? A change of politics at Athens, and not all the careful provisions of a binding covenant will be a guard against lukewarmness and slackness in carrying out its terms, if Nicias grasps the helm of State again.

The storm took long to gather. Throughout the year 419 B.C. there was bickering, there was quarrelling in plenty, but little indeed of interest. Alcibiades spent a summer in Achaea, wall-building at Patrae. Argos took the field and attacked Epidaurus. Did she hold this town, her Athenian allies could reach her direct by way of Aegina and Epidaurus and avoid a long sea voyage round Scyllaeum promontory and up the Argolic Gulf. Epidaurus held out stoutly, and presently the Spartans threw a small garrison into the town by sea. Athens retaliated by replacing the helot garrison at Pylos. Then there was marching and countermarching of armies

such as would have delighted the Duke of York. The warrior King of Sparta, Agis, was less well pleased. Twice he led his own Spartan army to his northern frontier. Twice the omens there forbade him to cross it, and he had to be content with a route march back home again. With omens and sacred months and trouble about water-meadows the year ran its inglorious course.{503} Everything was slowly working up towards war on a greater scale. If that war, when it came, had its place in the Peloponnese, well-nigh at Sparta's very doors, and no longer in the distant and more comfortable north, Sparta owed this to one man's statecraft and insight only. And just in the year when Alcibiades' new Argive policy is to be put to the final and conclusive arbitrament of arms he is not re-elected general at Athens. Such was the sense of the popular electorate in that the most stupid as the most brilliant of democracies.

### *§ 3. Agis' attack on Argos*{504}

In the summer of 418 B.C. the armies of the Peloponnesian Confederacy were mustered to relieve the pressure on Epidaurus by a great combined attack on the city of Argos. The commander-in-chief was the King of Sparta, Agis, son of Archidamus. The events of the summer are to reveal him both as a strategist and as a tactician of the very first rank in all the annals of Greek warfare. Thucydides, who may have drawn his information from Spartan sources jealous of the king, fails to do him justice.

The available armies upon the Peloponnesian side consisted of two widely separated forces. The Southern army under direct command of Agis consisted of Spartans (4200 hoplites), men of Tegea (1500 hoplites), Maenalians, and Heraeans, besides numerous helots and other light-armed troops. Its total strength in hoplites may be set at about 8000 men.

The Northern army must have numbered as many as 12,000 hoplites, contributed by the Boeotians (5000 hoplites), Corinthians (2000 hoplites), and the troops of Phlius, Epidaurus, Megara, Sicyon, and Pellene. The Boeotians also sent 5000 light-armed and 1000 cavalry and mounted infantry. To oppose these two armies the Allies could hardly muster more than 12,000 hoplites, of whom Elis contributed 3000, Mantinea perhaps as many, and the Argives the bulk of the remainder.{505} Of cavalry they had none. For these and for additions to their hoplite strength they depended on Athens. In actual fact, in this the first of the two campaigns of the year there was not one single Athenian soldier of any description who took part.

Agis, therefore, in his first campaign enjoyed a very large numerical superiority of available troops. His difficulty was that the united force of the Allies lay directly between his

two armies. His own Southern army was concentrated at Sparta, the Northern army at Phlius. Argos, his objective, lay between. His first strategical problem was that of concentration.

He marched out of Sparta northwards, intending to join the Northern army at Phlius. He himself was heavily outnumbered by the enemy until he could effect this juncture.

The direct route from Sparta to Phlius ran by Caryae, Tegea, and Mantinea. This way was blocked by Mantinea. The sole alternative was the circuitous route to the west, by Belmina, the site of the later city of Megalopolis, Methydrion, Orchomenus (which at the moment was friendly to Sparta), and Oligyrton. Agis directed his march by this route.

The first and more pressing duty of the Argives was to intercept this march and prevent the Southern army joining the Northern army at Phlius. The latter was still in process of mobilisation and could be neglected. It clearly also was impossible for the Argives to march against Phlius without exposing both their city and their communications to attack by the Southern army in their absence. They also outnumbered the Southern army. The five Argive generals at once chose the obvious and the correct strategy. They marched out westwards from Argos with their whole army and took up a strong position at Methydrion on rising ground across the line of Agis' advance. So they blocked his passage, and protected also both Mantinea and Argos itself. Agis could not swerve eastwards against either city without exposing his smaller army at once to isolation and attack.

The king had not the least intention of doing anything so foolish. He arrived at Methydrion and occupied the rising slope on the opposite side of the depression which separated him from the opposing army. The latter prepared for battle on the following day.

The morning came. There was neither life nor sound on the opposite hillside. Agis had quietly and comfortably marched off in the night while the enemy sentinels, it must be supposed, dozed, and, slipping unobserved round their position, the king was out of sight and beyond pursuit when day dawned. The Argives sadly marched off home to Argos again. Agis pursued his journey and duly arrived at Phlius. He had won a most notable strategical victory without losing a man. This use of night marching is commendable. Another Spartan general, Eurylochus in the north-west, had also employed it in exactly the same way to join his Ambraciot allies at Olpae in face of an enemy force blocking the way. The carelessness of the Argive watch defies language fitly to describe it.[{506}] The whole strategical character of the campaign was changed at once, immeasurably to the advantage of Agis.

Why, it might be asked, did not the Argives march promptly upon unwalled Sparta in the absence from that city of its king and army?

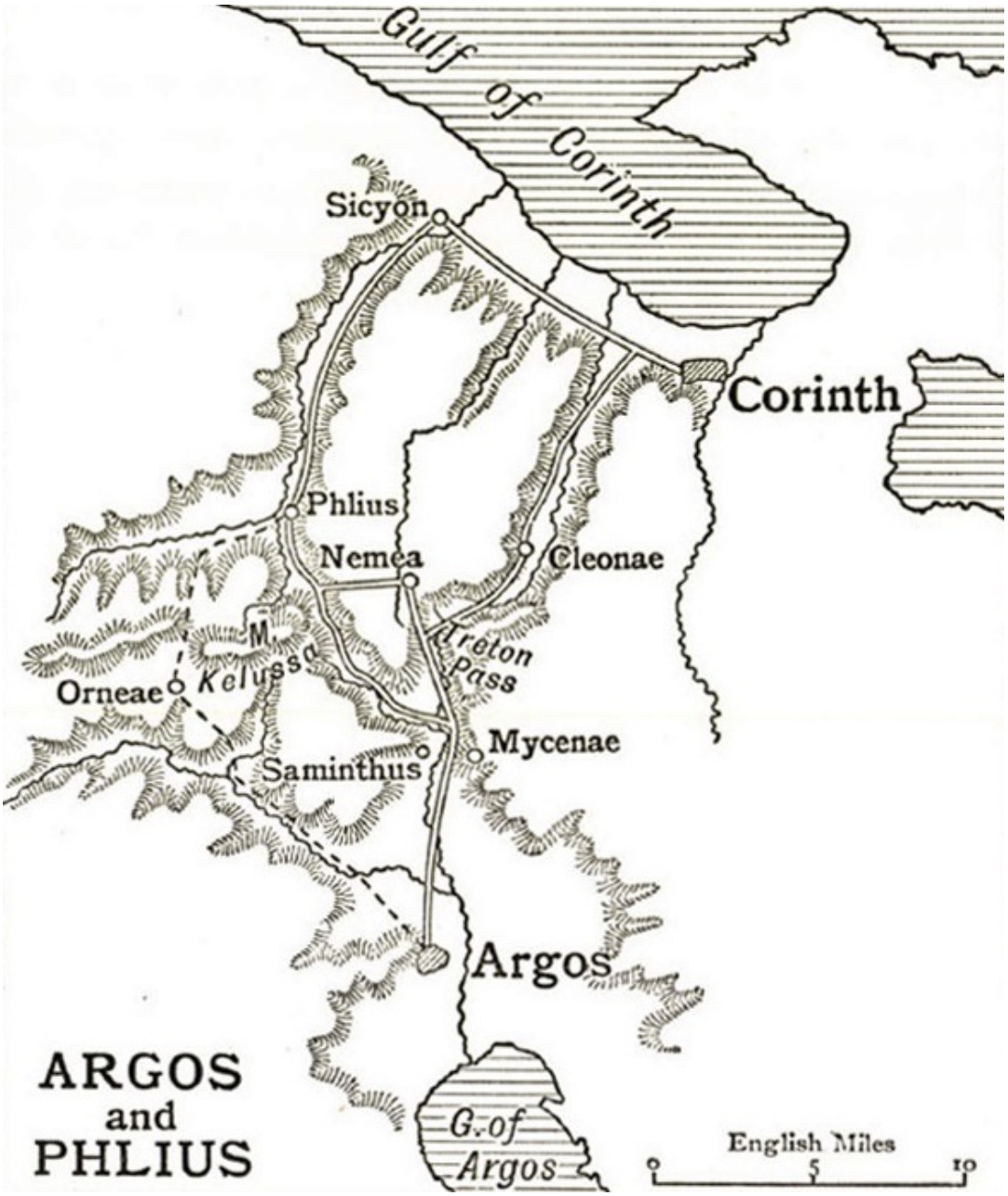
This is indeed a brave idea. But Sparta was probably not wholly denuded of troops, and the defence of Argos might also reasonably seem to have the prior claim. In fact, however, the Greek was not yet born who should indulge the dream of bearding the lion in its den.

Agis, now at Phlius, disposed of a powerful army of 20,000 heavy infantry, 5000 cavalry, and plentiful light-armed. The hostile city and its weaker defending army of some 12,000 hoplites, without cavalry, lay 16 or 17 miles away over the mountains. The king commanded what Thucydides calls "a finer Hellenic army than any seen hitherto".{507} The strategical initiative had passed completely into his hands.

* * * * *

The watershed of the Asopus and Inachus rivers, a rough mountain country, which separated Phlius and the plain of Argos, was penetrated by one road only which was suitable for cavalry. This was the Treton Pass, which lay south of the hamlet of Nemea and came down to the plain by the site of Mycenae. The Argive generals marched northwards from their city to Nemea. They expected a frontal attack and had every prospect of repulsing it in their chosen position across the main road.

There was, however, another and even more direct route from Phlius which joined the main road at Mycenae. This was the Kelussa Pass, a short distance to the west of the Treton Pass. The Argives must have been well aware of its existence, and the position chosen for their army at Nemea instead of near Mycenae, where both approaches converge and join, debouching from the hills, is somewhat inexplicable. A modern general defending Argos against attack from the north could hardly do otherwise than make Mycenae his headquarters, and content himself with throwing a strong advance guard forward to Nemea. The Kelussa Pass, however, seems to have been difficult going and not easy for a large army. The Argives may have relied on Agis doing the obvious thing, on the known presence of cavalry in the enemy army, which cavalry *must* use the Treton Pass, and on being so near to Mycenae that they could at once fall back in time to save themselves should they be threatened from the Kelussa Pass. Whatever their reasons, out they marched with their army and blocked the road at Nemea.{508}




All was curiously quiet in their front. At daybreak a scout came hurrying. There was a Spartan army, he reported breathlessly, down on the Argive plain ravaging Saminthus, between themselves and the city. Agis had outwitted them again.

At Phlius he had learnt of a third way over the hills, still more to the west. This was but a rough bridle track by way of a village called Orneae, but it turned the hostile position even at Mycenae completely, leading down the Inachus valley into the Argive plain to the north-west of the city. The king resolved so to use it with a portion of his force as to cut off the enemy army completely and trap it between his armies. For this purpose another march by night was necessary.

He divided his forces into three columns. The right, his 8000 best troops from Sparta, Arcadia, and Epidaurus, was to pursue the westernmost track and reach the Argive plain by daybreak. The left, the 7000 men of Boeotia, Sicyon, and Megara, with all the cavalry, was to advance up the Treton Pass, some hours after the departure of the flanking column; and the centre, numerically the weakest, about 5000 men from Corinth, Pellene, and Phlius, was to follow the Kelussa Pass marching simultaneously with the left column. If the Argive army remained at Nemea it was trapped beyond all saving. If it retired southwards under pressure of the Boeotian advance, it would emerge upon the plain to find the right hand column in position between itself and Argos, and with the two other armies of the left and centre pressing hard upon its heels, with the many squadrons of the Boeotian horse scouring the plain to the east and cutting off its last hope of escape in this direction. The Argives would then be veritably "caught in the middle".

It was a brilliant piece of strategy. But it involved certain risks, the night march and the difficulty of accurate timing. Yet such a strategy has won notable triumphs in the history of war.

The timed meeting upon the actual battlefield of armies converging to it by different routes to fight in co-operation, this is a famous stratagem of war. It is also one of the most hazardous.

So Wellington made his stand upon the low ridge of Waterloo, confident all through the hours of desperate battle that Blücher, the "indomitable old marshal", would yet strike in upon his left in time to save the day.[{509}]

So fifty years later, on July 3, 1866, two Prussian armies attacked the Austrians on the heights to the west of the Elbe at Königgrätz. The assailants made no progress until, as planned, the Second Prussian army of the Crown Prince, marching by its different route, fell upon the right flank and right rear of the enemy at mid-day, and the Austrians fled.

In 418 B.C. the right hand column had the longest march, the hardest way to find, and the most perilous position to occupy when the march was done. Agis placed himself at its head, and the column disappeared in the darkness of the night. Night marching in a difficult country is notoriously slow. The distance was not far short of 20 miles. Yet it was duly in position "ravaging Saminthus" by daybreak. Probably no marching feat in the whole of the great war surpasses this achievement of the Spartan soldier and his king.

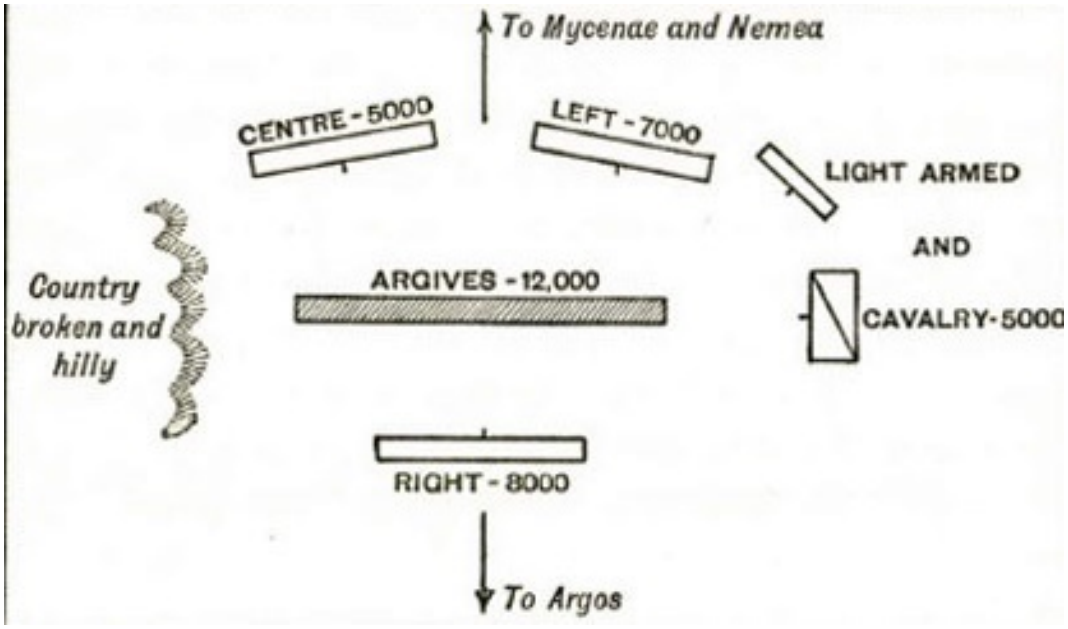
On receiving this information, the Argive army evacuated Nemea instantly and marched at full speed southwards. Its right flank on leaving the hills above Mycenae came into contact

with the enemy's centre column, as it emerged from the Kelussa Pass. The Argives brushed this aside without great loss, and, continuing their retreat, came out upon the plain and drew up in order of battle facing Agis and his 8000 men. The king's centre column had obeyed orders. But it was not strong enough to do more than worry the flank of the enemy as he retired.

Overleaf is shown the position of the armies as planned by Agis that morning.

But now the story becomes puzzling, and Thucydides gives us no kind of a solution of its puzzles.

The first difficulty is that the Argive army was delighted with its own position. They had "cut off the Spartans in their own country and close to the city of Argos".{510}




Obviously Agis and his 8000 *were* between the Argive 12,000 and the hostile city of Argos. But there were no troops in the city. And *what* of the Argive rear and left flank as it faced him? What in the situation here could delight the Argives?

The second difficulty is Agis' own action. Just before the signal for battle was given, two men came from the Argive army and asked him for an interview. One was Thrasyllus, one of the five Argive generals, and the other was the official friend and representative of Sparta in Argos. They came entirely on their own initiative to suggest that both armies should be "called off", and to offer arbitration, a treaty, peace. Then Agis accepted the offer, after consulting one of the two Spartan ephors who were with him. He concluded a four months' truce on the spot and marched his army away. The Argives then themselves went home. The end of all this

elaborate manœuvring was—no battle at all.

The greatest indignation against the commanders was expressed, and on both sides. Thrasyllus was stoned by his own troops before they entered Argos. He saved his life by taking refuge at an altar, but his property was confiscated. Agis' soldiers were better disciplined, but there was angry grumbling in the ranks as he marched them off. And at Sparta, when the news came presently that the Allies had taken Orchomenus, the wrath of the Government with the king could hardly be restrained within measurable limits. "In a fit of passion quite unlike the Spartan character they all but resolved to raze his house and fine him a hundred thousand drachmae." In the end, on his humbly promising atonement in the future, they contented themselves with passing a quite unprecedented law, that ten counsellors should be appointed whose consent he must in future obtain before he could lead the army from the city on any expedition.

"Such an opportunity for destroying the enemy had never occurred before." Exactly the same view was taken on both sides, by both armies, and by both States.{511}

Why, when everything has gone "according to plan", does Agis withdraw and not fight?

The German Busolt wrestles manfully with the problem on more than one occasion. The Athenians were expected every moment, he first suggests. Had they arrived, Agis' peril would have been great.{512}

Quite obviously they had not arrived. Equally obviously they arrived (in miserable numbers) soon after, but not in time for battle, probably not on the day when there should have been the battle. Nor is there any hint that the Argives expected their coming. If this was expected, it would be but an inducement the more for Agis to fight at once before they came.

So Busolt has to fall back on a theory of "political motives". Sparta had friends in Argos. "To make terms after a display of strength would encourage this party and win Argos over peaceably to the Spartan side."{513}

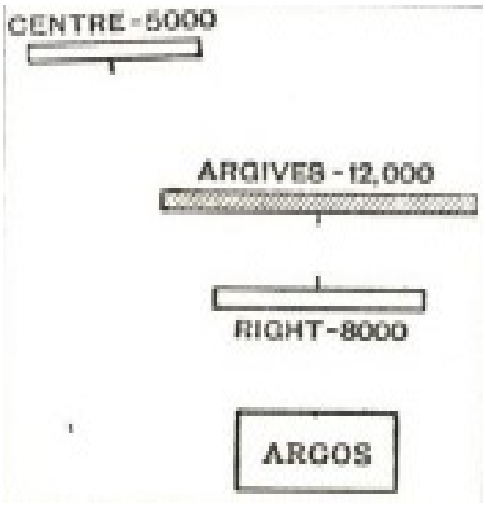
This was a curious method of encouragement, to display your strength by refusing battle when you possess every advantage in numbers and occupy a position selected by yourself. The actual result was to leave the Argives with the rooted conviction that if their generals had not been fools or worse their troops would have annihilated the enemy.

The Cambridge historian remarks sagely that "Agis considered his position precarious".{514}

This is not over helpful. Why did he ever choose to occupy that position if, at the last moment, he was to discover it precarious? And how was it precarious?

There is surely just one solution of all these puzzles, namely, that things had *not* gone "according to plan". Agis and his column had reached the plain. The centre column had marched and come into touch with the enemy. *But* the left column on which everything depended was not there. The Boeotians had failed him. No horse or foot pursued up the Treton pass. On the next page is shown the actual position on the morning.

**ALCIBIADES**




Just as General French and his 1000 gallant weary horse on the hill above Paardeberg looked anxiously westward all those interminable hours of the February morning in 1900—would the dust cloud *never* show the coming of the infantry to close the passage of the drift to Cronje's 4000?—so Agis must have looked northward for his enclosing columns and his cavalry brigade and seen—nothing, save perhaps a weak centre clinging somewhat timorously to the hills. Where was the lost column? His own troops expected their coming and demanded battle, partly in the expectation, partly because Spartans would never admit any wisdom in retreat. The king was not so confident. The lost column had the easiest route, and all the cavalry. They had disobeyed orders? They never meant to come? They were delaying fatally at Nemea? The Athenians were threatening their rear, holding them back? Something untoward had happened at the last moment. They were not coming at all!

What now was his own position? He found himself isolated between an exultant enemy (who had three men to every two of his) and a hostile city some three miles or so in his rear, and in a hostile countryside, with his men weary after a long night march and scanty time for food. Indeed his position *was* precarious. It were better to extricate his men by agreement—so

luckily offered him—without loss. Himself would bear every consequence. He would not run the risk of destroying Sparta's only army. No wonder the Argive troops, seeing nothing, knowing nothing of any peril of consequence in the hills behind them, stoned their craven general.

Agis cannot openly blame the Boeotians at Sparta later. They are far too indispensable as allies to offend them by reproaches.{515} He will atone for a failure by fighting when he has the chance again. But the failure is not that of a faulty strategy nor of cowardice in the face of the enemy. Agis' failure was in trusting too much, in a delicate and complicated strategy, to the intelligence and prompt obedience of his divisional commanders. Had he himself remained at Phlius' headquarters to see his orders executed to the letter, all might have gone well. But the place of a Spartan king is with the Spartan troops and in the position of the greatest danger. In his absence—who are the Spartans that Boeotians shall obey them without question?

Agis displayed a strategical ability, a fertility of resource, a willingness to take risks, which are rare in Greek history. His tools broke in his hands. He has learnt his lesson. Henceforward he must go straight for his foe. Can he, by tactical skill, accomplish what his strategical genius has not been permitted, by disobedience or stupidity, to perform?

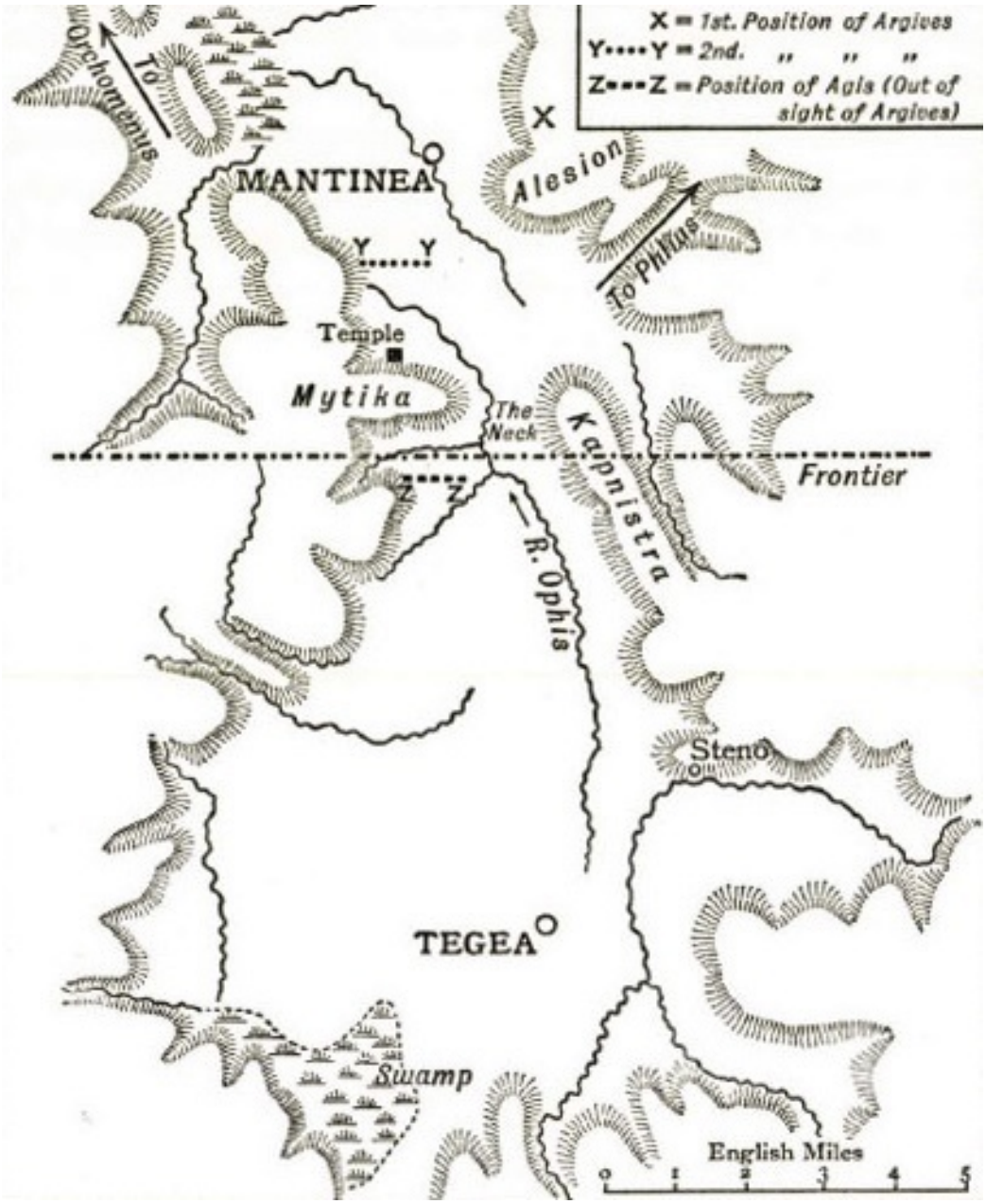
### *§ 4. The battle of Mantinea*{516}

Soon after Agis had withdrawn his armies from the district, there arrived at Argos 1300 Athenian troops (1000 foot and 300 horse) under command of the two generals Laches and Nicostratus. These were old intimates of Nicias and associated with him in his "peace policy". Alcibiades accompanied the force, but as an "envoy" and not in any military capacity. It was he who harangued the Argive Assembly, and, with difficulty, persuaded the people to denounce their truce with Sparta, thanks to vigorous backing by representatives from Mantinea and Elis. The Allies then marched on Orchomenus and compelled the surrender of the town. This was most useful. For it secured both their communications with Elis and the west, and it guarded the rear of any force operating to the south in Arcadia. It also gravely hampered any co-operation between the Spartans and their allies of the Isthmus cities or beyond.

Then the Allied army marched on Tegea, to the vast displeasure of the men of Elis. These had hoped to use the entire army for their own local purposes against Lepreon. Such would have been the very height of military folly, as a glance at the map will show. But the 3000 men of Elis marched away homewards in a sulk. The remainder of the Allies, so much the weaker,

proceeded to Mantinea.

**MANTINEA and TEGEA**




This city lay in the same upland Arcadian valley as Tegea, which was 10 miles to the south of it and about the same distance from the Laconian frontier. The valley was flat and apt to be water-logged. The mountains surrounded it on all sides, the western spur of Mytika approaching the eastern ridge of Kapnistra within a little over a mile. This bottle neck, or rather hour-glass neck, separated the territories of the two cities. These being near neighbours cherished a tradition of enmity which would be singular in any country other than ancient Greece. Tegea relied on Sparta and had been a loyal and valuable member of the Peloponnesian Confederacy for more than a century. Mantinea in consequence relied on Argos,

to which city she was further attached by the enjoyment of a similar democratic constitution for the last half-century. There remained one local and peculiarly virulent cause of bickering between the two Arcadian cities. There is no outlet through the ring of mountains for any of the streams which descend into the valley. Every one of these, sooner or later, sinks into the earth by a pot-hole. Chief of the streams is the brook Ophis, which moves slowly along from south near Tegea to north and disappears in its hole a couple of miles to the south-west of Mantinea. The whole slope of the valley from south to north is very gradual. If the men of Tegea could expedite the water's flow, the Mantineans found their fields flooded. If the men of Mantinea could arrest or divert the brook's course, the swamps round Tegea encroached upon that city's arable lands. That the two cities should co-operate, for the benefit of both, on any scheme of canalisation or other hydraulic device to regulate the Ophis was an idea beyond all possibility. Nature had kindly given them a reason for quarrelling which could never fail.

There was, in Roman days, just the like cause of dispute between two little cities in Central Italy. Rieti is in the upland vale of the Velino river, which, a few miles below the charming little town, tumbles in a glorious cascade down to a rich land at bottom of the fall where is the city of Terni. The river has the habit of increasing the height of the rocky lip of the fall by deposits. When this has continued for some time, the river's flow is checked and "Rosy Vale" becomes swampy. When the men of Rieti sallied out to clear the river's way through the rocks at top of the cascade, the citizens of Terni found the rush of water flooding their own fields. So the peace of that most smiling of Italian countrysides was marred by never-ceasing strife between the two hot-headed little towns. Today Terni will take all the water it can get. Manufactures and electricity go far to drain the Rosy Vale of Rieti.

In the late summer of 418 B.C. the Allies mustered in force at Mantinea, threatening Tegea. As in every Greek city, so in Tegea, there was a minority faction which wished the assailants well. If Sparta would save the town, every effort must rapidly be made. Her allies were ordered to gather at Tegea, and King Agis, incommoded by his Spartan Commissary of Ten, marched at head of his army from Sparta north. There can be no doubt that he was burning with the desire to redeem his unjustly damaged reputation as a soldier. His one longing now was for a pitched battle with the enemy. Let it once come to fighting, and Agis, like the youthful Bonaparte, could disregard civilian marplots. Marching by Orestheion, a longer but favourite route of Spartan armies to the north, he arrived in ample time at Tegea. And there his Arcadian allies joined him. Sparta had made her greatest military effort of the war. Five-sixths of her full

levy was with Agis. The other sixth, the older and younger men, Agis sent back from Orestheion to his brother-king Pleistoanax to act as garrison to Sparta. His own Spartans numbered exactly 4184 men. So grave was the anxiety at home that presently Pleistoanax also marched north with his remaining sixth. Though law had for a century forbidden both Spartan kings to be present at one and the same time with the army, yet Pleistoanax must march to see what befell in this the most critical of campaigns. He had actually reached Tegea before he heard of the battle fought and the victory won a few miles away.

Agis had also sent messengers to his northern allies, Boeotians, Corinthians, and the rest to join him at Tegea. They mustered at the Isthmus. But it was not easy to find a way through the enemy's country. Orchomenus now lay like a lion in their path. If they came at all—and Agis neither could nor did count upon their coming—they could enter the valley only under the heights of Alesion to the south-east of Mantinea. So only could they avoid Mantinea itself.

This the Allies, the Argives, Mantineans, Athenians, and others, knew as well as did Agis. They also found themselves somewhat unexpectedly upon the defensive. They must guard Mantinea. Since Agis' arrival at Tegea a march in force against this town seemed a risky proceeding. At least they had better get the men of Elis back first. An urgent message induced these, still without enthusiasm, to begin to retrace their steps. At any moment they might enter the valley by way of Orchomenus from the north-west. Meanwhile Agis was already at their gates. He marched north from Tegea, crossed the frontier at the Neck, emerged from the oak forest in full view of the city, and pitched his camp at the Temple of Heracles on the northern slope of Mytika. From his camp he sent out ravaging parties to lay waste the Mantineans' fields. His one object was to tempt the Allies out to battle on the level before the Eleians came. For his own reinforcements from the north he cared not very much. But, at least, he would be in close proximity to them did he see their column winding down under the Alesion ridge into the plain opposite his camp.

But the Allies were wary and in no mood to accept immediate battle.

They took up a strong position just outside Mantinea on the rocky crest of Alesion. This was almost impregnable to direct assault and had the merit also of blocking the way to Agis' reinforcements from the north. From Alesion ridge there was a clear view down the valley over and beyond the oak woods of the Neck. Only the Mytika spur concealed the ground behind it to the south from view. And they looked straight down upon Agis and his army encamped at the Temple of Heracles.

The king grew impatient. If the enemy would not come down, he would go up against them. He led his troops to the direct assault of the Alesion ridge.

But the nearer they approached the more impregnable the position of the defenders seemed. A veteran at the king's side dared to remonstrate. "Mending one ill by another", he shouted, thinking of the retreat from Argos. Agis himself was of much the same mind. Within actually a javelin's cast of the enemy he called off the attack. The whole army turned about abruptly and marched off southwards, vanishing out of sight behind the spur of Mytika.

The troops on Alesion were first amazed, and then elated. The enemy had run away. Why not pursue? But much time was needed for hot dispute and recrimination. Angry taunts hurtled round the heads of their worried generals. How much longer were they to sit idle on the hill? their infuriated troops demanded. Was it cowardice or treachery? They had let the Spartans escape at Argos. Here they were about to let them slip away again! The generals could not control their army. Towards the close of day they led the whole force cautiously down to the plain and bivouacked for the night, intending next day to march south to the attack.

Agis had been spending that day, according to Thucydides, "diverting the stream, hoping that this would bring the Allies down to the level to try and prevent this". Mr. Woodhouse, in a recent and suggestive study of the battle, makes merry at this. Only near Tegea, he argues, could Agis have indulged his taste for hydraulics with any prospect of result, and the Mantineans could not have hoped to hinder this. "Thucydides", he says, "is putting forward a mere guess, and that not a good one, by way of explaining movements the rationale of which quite eluded him." Agis, according to this critic, had a baggage-train in camp. His movement against Alesion was but a feint to cover its withdrawal, and succeeded. He must entice the enemy down into the plain. A retreat south from the Temple of Heracles was his device. And this too succeeded. The baggage-train, however, seems an unnecessary addition to the narrative, if not to Agis' army. And it leaves Agis still with a day on his hands. Doubtless "a flooded plain" would not be an inducement to descend to it. But Agis' "hydraulics" can hardly have hoped to flood the plain in a few hours. Nor would "diverting the stream" promote a flood lower down the same stream. It seems that he did set his troops to work perhaps clearing the channels of the small tributaries into the Ophis from the western heights and so causing a rise in the water lower down. The news would reach the foe and hit them hard on a sensitive spot. "They are tampering with the water." Down they would come to stop it, Agis reckoned, setting his engineers rather amusedly to work, while the bulk of his army rested and made

ready for battle. In this sense the “hydraulics” are a legitimate *ruse de guerre*, and not to be too contemptuously dismissed from the story of the battle.

Down at least the enemy did come, eager for pursuit, fearful, not so much for flooded fields, as lest the Spartans should escape them once again. Agis had achieved his object. He had drawn the enemy down from the hill. Probably he could see that Alesion that evening was bare of troops. Somewhere then in the level beyond the Mytika ridge and the wood on the Neck he might hope to find them.

Next day he found them somewhat earlier than he expected. His column in usual march-formation came round the spur and through the wood, making for its old camp site at the Temple. It had scarcely emerged into the open before it saw the enemy drawn up in line, in full order of battle, waiting. To this extent Agis’ scouts had failed him rather badly.

It is at this point that Thucydides turns aside to write his memorable praise of Spartan discipline. Never, he says, had a Spartan army been so aghast as now, stumbling thus straight upon the enemy.{517} But no man lost his head. Every man knew his place and what to do. Orders rang out sharply—from battalion commander to company commander, from company commander to platoon leader, from platoon leader to section leader. The whole long column deployed with perfect precision into order of battle. Agis was ready before the commanders of the enemy’s composite forces had finished each making his usual fervid exhortation to his own troops and reminding them of ancient glories and present emergencies. The king himself had no time to address even a few brief words to his own men. But they exhorted themselves, says Thucydides, just “reminding one another of what their brave spirits knew already. They had learned”, the historian drily adds, “that true safety was to be found in long previous training and not in impassioned orations uttered when going into action.”{518}

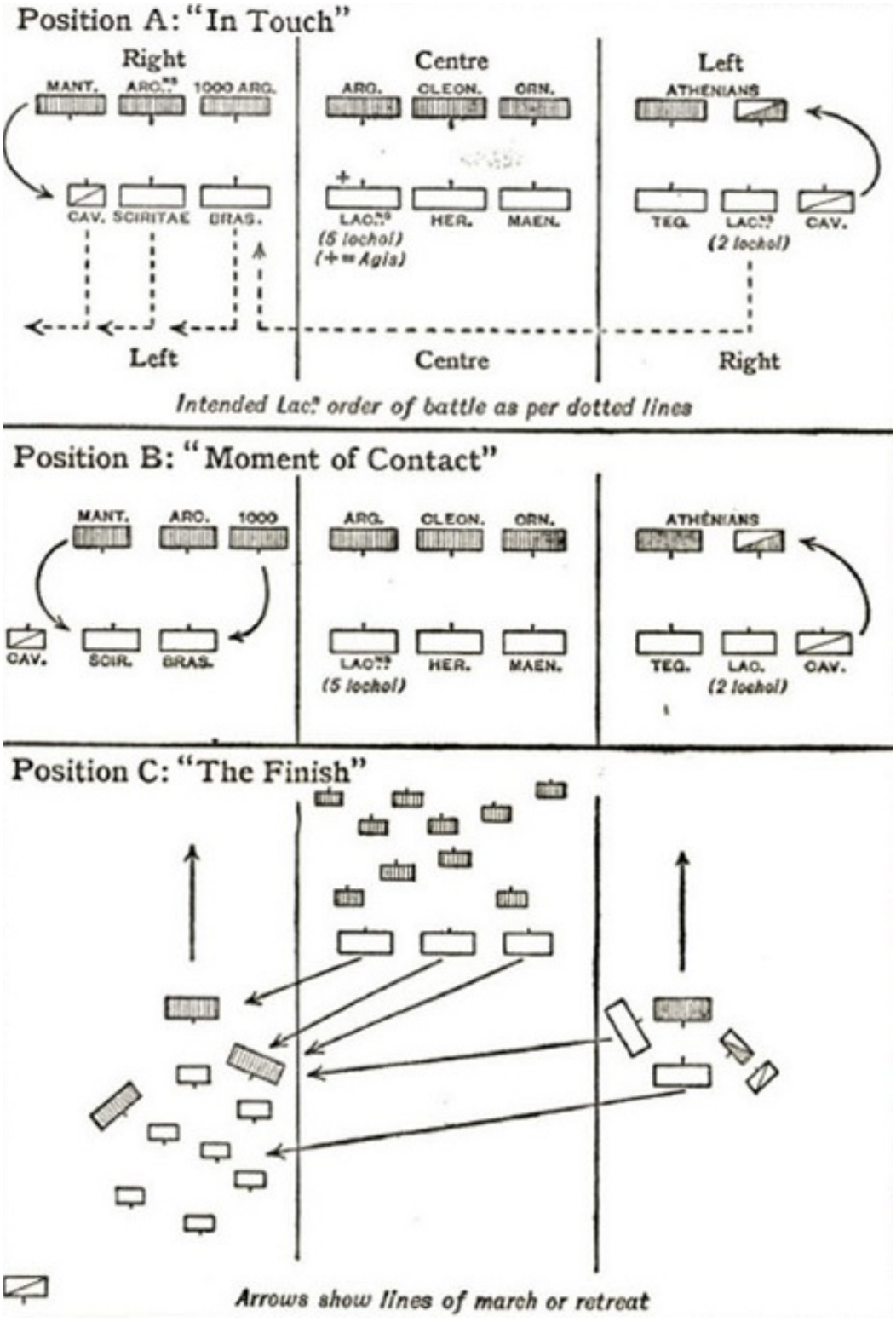
The lines of battle closed, the Allies impetuously, the others with deliberation, to the sound of flutes, which played to keep the men in step, not “as a matter of religion”, remarks Thucydides curiously. Even so the Czar’s armies in former days had their bands in the fighting line. It became apparent, before the two fronts clashed, that the Allies were outnumbered, and that each line overlapped the opposite line on its own right. This was likely to be emphasised in the actual moment of contact since every Greek hoplite tended, even unconsciously, to edge towards the right, keeping his own unguarded side under shelter of his neighbour’s shield. Not even the tallest, most stalwart, and most resolute “right-hand man” of the line could resist such lateral pressure as it ran down the entire front.

On the Peloponnesian left stood the Sciritae, 600 strong, and next them Brasidas' veteran battalion. The centre, from left to right, consisted of five battalions of Spartans, the Heraeans, and the Maenalians. On the right next them were the men of Tegea, then two more Spartan battalions. The cavalry were on both extremes of the line and counted for absolutely nothing in the entire engagement.

On the Allies' right stood in order the Mantineans, other Arcadians, and the *corps d'élite* of the whole Argive army, a picked battalion of 1000 vigorous youngsters who enjoyed a special training. Next these in the centre, opposite the five Spartan battalions, were the bulk of the Argives, and the men of Cleonae and Orneae. The 1300 Athenians composed the left of the line, their 300 cavalry being on the wing. On the right of their whole line the Mantineans overlapped and threatened to enclose the Sciritae opposed to them. In still greater measure the men of Tegea by themselves extended out beyond the Athenian contingent, while the two Spartan battalions beyond them were practically "in air"—save for the threatening activity of the Athenian cavalry on the opposed wing.

Agis saw in a flash the danger to his left and the superfluity of infantry upon his right. He gave a rapid order. The Sciritae and "Brasidas' men" were at once to left turn, quick march, and front, equalising their front to the Mantineans. This left a gap in the line between his left and centre. But the gap was to be filled at once by the two Spartan battalions on his extreme right doubling behind his centre to reach their new posts in time. It was truly a hazardous manœuvre when the foe were a spear's length away. Yet the king judged that there was time and relied on Spartan discipline to effect the combined movement successfully. These orders of his concerned Spartans only (for the Sciritae were a special Spartan battalion). He could not order his whole line to left turn or left incline without exposing their unshielded sides to the charging foe.

**BATTLE OF MANTINEA**




This is Thucydides' story of Agis and his orders. It rings soundly. The most recent critic suggests that the gap was left purposely to entice the Argive "thousand" into it, when, the Spartan centre moving forward, the two battalions from the right would come marching down behind the advancing line and fall upon the flank of the thousand. There is no kind of advantage in this version.{519} The gap became such another tactical blunder as was Marmont's famous

gap at Salamanca into which Wellington hurled his troops.

For once, the once which always befalls when least desirable, Spartan discipline failed. The Sciritae and "Brasidas' men" obeyed orders. There was the gap. The battalion commanders on the right flatly refused to budge. It may be that they felt they had no time. Later they were banished for it, after condemnation at Sparta for cowardice. They deserved a heavier penalty.

In vain Agis sent to recall the Sciritae to their original position. The foe were upon them. The "thousand" Argives plunged shouting into the gap. The Spartan left, distressed by order and countermanded order, wavered. The Mantineans swept round them on one side; the thousand beat upon the other; the Arcadians smote at them in front. The whole Spartan left broke and fled, hotly pursued by the victorious foe.

But elsewhere along the line the battle was going very differently. Furious with anger, Agis with his picked royal bodyguard and his five battalions charged upon the enemy's centre. It fled at once. Much may be said for a *corps d'élite* but, in the Argive army, it left but sorry quality in the other troops. Ignominiously, with hardly a blow struck, Argives, and those of Cleonae and Orneae, turned their backs and ran.[{520}]

Meanwhile on Agis' right there was a more stubborn fight. The Athenian cavalry did good service against the weight of numbers, and the thousand infantry of Athens fought resolutely and well.

Then Agis showed himself a born leader of men. He had his troops in hand, however flushed with victory and eager to pursue. His orders ran sharply down his centre and his right. Every man was to left turn and come down athwart the battlefield to the rescue of the routed left.

Every man obeyed. The irresistible battalions swept across the ground upon the pursuing Mantineans, Arcadians, and the thousand Argives. These were caught and swept helplessly from the field, those farthest in pursuit, the Mantineans on the extreme wing, suffering the heaviest loss. The Allies' centre continued its rapid flight. The Athenians, seeing, with some surprise, their own assailants drawing away and marching across their front, seized the happy chance and themselves retired quietly and in good order. This was the more natural since both their generals, Laches and Nicostratus, already lay dead upon the field. And yet—if ever there were a chance offered for a counterstroke, surely the fortune of war offered it to the Athenians

at that moment when the enemy marched across their front, their unshielded sides exposed to attack. Was there no young subaltern of infantry or cavalry that day who would lead his men to make one final bid for victory?

So ended the battle of Mantinea, by far the greatest and the most interesting of all land battles of the great war. Agis had won a renowned victory. He had redeemed his own prestige, but he had also won back by one single stroke for Sparta her own reputation for invincible valour which the surrender at Sphacteria had shattered.{521} The actual casualty list on either side was, even for a Greek battle, not very heavy. The Allies lost some 1100 men; the Peloponnesians scarcely a third of the number. But never was the immense moral effect of a single victory more marked. And Alcibiades' "Argive policy" lay broken on the battlefield of Mantinea, never to be restored again.

There were many causes of this disaster to the Allies—Spartan discipline, the generalship of Agis, Argive cowardice, Eleian selfishness. But the Athenian—not the soldier who fought gallantly (redeeming the disgrace of Delium), but the Government—deserves also the most unsparing censure. The Allies, thanks to the Eleian defection, were outnumbered. Had the Government of Athens done its duty, the army at Mantinea, in spite of all the sulks of the men of Elis, might themselves have far outnumbered, and then, in all likelihood, have routed the enemy. Athens' army of at least 20,000 heavy infantry was hardly employed elsewhere (save for a foolish expedition to the Thraceward district as will be explained). The Government sent 1000 to the battle, and a second 1000 arrived when the battle was over. What would not 5000, 7500, 10,000, under Demosthenes have achieved? The slackness and criminal negligence of the Government can only be ascribed to the one statesman, Nicias, whose heart was not in the campaign, who hated both the Argive policy and its author, Alcibiades. Party faction once again set out to ruin Athens.

Why also was the Athenian navy not used? It was practically idle this summer. A fleet threatening the coast of Laconia must have kept at home a large part of the Spartan army which fought at Mantinea. Perhaps even Sparta would have left Tegea alone to her fate. The Athenian fleet did nothing. The Argives had begged for this help many times. "Come and land just a handful of troops," they urged imploringly. "They can always get away back on shipboard again," they added, knowing their allies a little too well. No single ship comes. No single Athenian soldier lands timorously on the Laconian shore. Busolt rightly stigmatises this as "one of Nicias' gravest political sins".{522}

And, finally, why was not Alcibiades general this year? As mere envoy he was able to prevail on the Argives to denounce their truce with Sparta. Nicias must bitterly have regretted this. But then Alcibiades disappears from the story. He can hardly even have been present at the battle. He was a soldier. Now, when above all he was wanted, he was not employed.

This puzzle, the last of the "puzzles of Mantinea", is very great. It is just one of the cases where Thucydides' silence about events in Athens is most baffling and a real historical blemish. For political events in Athens did gravely influence the course of military events outside the city. Thucydides' concentration of interest on the latter ought not to have hidden the importance of the former from his eyes, exile though he himself was.

Dr. Gustav Gilbert has tried in this case to remedy the defect.{523}

The Athenians had a peculiar system of getting rid of a troublesome politician. This was named Ostracism. Any year in February, just before the election of generals, the people could if they liked meet *en masse* and record, each man upon an oyster shell—"ostrakon"—the name of any citizen whatever whom he wished to be rid of out of Athens. If when votes were counted 6000 shells bore the name of the same citizen, he retired with dignity from the city for a period of ten years into a species of honourable banishment. Unlike an exile he did not lose his property. It was a drastic democratic method of "outing" either a Government or an Opposition statesman of repute: a "decennial general election" would be mild compared to it.

About this time in Athens the radical leader Hyperbolus, of whom something has already been said,{524} was emboldened to propose an ostracism. His rivals for the mastery of the Assembly annoyed him. Now for some reason or other he considered he had a good chance of ridding himself (and the city) of some one of them. Alcibiades and Nicias stood badly in his way. There was a third man Phaeax whom some drag into the story. But Phaeax can hardly have counted.{525}

The threatened statesmen were alarmed. Quarrel among themselves as bitterly as they might, their adherents were so nearly balanced in numbers that the peril seemed to threaten both alike. Neither could possibly be confident that the vote would fall out in his own favour. The solution was obvious. Nicias and Alcibiades on this one occasion collogued together. Similar instructions reached all their adherents. When the shells were counted, it was Hyperbolus himself, to his indignant amazement, who found himself ostracised. He retired to Samos. Nicias and Alcibiades resumed their own quarrels, now easy in their minds. The unexpected

storm had been diverted and had passed quite harmlessly away.

But the man in the street was not so pleased. The whole intention of ostracism had been to relieve the city of the fierceness of political dispute and leave one man in untroubled influence at least for a time. But now the disreputable *tertium quid* had paid the price of his temerity, and the political rivalry of the greater men was likely to be worse than ever. It was a low intrigue. Men looked askance both at Nicias the virtuous and at Alcibiades the reprobate. And ostracism was so discredited that it never was tried again.{526}

Now if Hyperbolus proposed the ostracism in February 418 B.C., as Dr. Gilbert suggests, it is this disgust of the people at the abuse of a time-honoured institution which explains the fact that they will not elect Alcibiades as general that year. He is the arch-intriguer. The worthy Nicias can surely have been dragged into this intrigue only reluctantly. “For Brutus is an honourable man.” The electors vented their wrath upon the tempter, not the tempted.

But evidence is against this skilful suggestion. Hyperbolus was assassinated on Samos in 411 B.C. A good historian says that the Athenians ostracised him for six years. He cannot have proposed the method before February 417 B.C.{527}

And this is all to the good, since the later date, and it only, explains why he did make the proposal. For the disaster at Mantinea had thoroughly discredited both Alcibiades and Nicias. Alcibiades was at the bottom of the whole policy which had led up to the defeat. Nicias was in large measure responsible for the defeat itself, as has been explained. Naturally Hyperbolus reckoned on their equal unpopularity, that he would get rid at least of one. As naturally the other two saw that a common peril must be averted by common action. So the boomerang came round and smote the thrower. The ostracism of Hyperbolus is one of the results, not one of the causes, of the defeat at Mantinea.

But why Alcibiades was not elected general for 418 B.C. remains to this day a puzzle unexplained. Who can account for the caprice of a popular electorate? Ostracism had been the antidote for that disease. The medicine now was stale and had lost its virtue.

### *§ 5. The Chalcidic “alternative to Sicily”*

Did I not, without involving you in any great danger or expense, combine the most powerful States of the Peloponnese against the Spartans, and compel these to stake at Mantinea all that they had upon the fortune of one day?

So cried Alcibiades to the Athenian people three years later, looking back.[{528}] He states a fact. But things had gone awry. Sparta was by common consent supreme again on land. The Argive policy was dead. Sparta had set up oligarchies at Argos, at Sicyon, and in Achaea soon after her victory, and concluded a fifty years' offensive and defensive alliance with Argos.[{529}] Even though the Athenian people repented of their fickleness and elected Alcibiades general both for 417 B.C. and for 416 B.C. he could not again galvanise the corpse of his Argive policy into life.

He did what little he could. The Argive oligarchy was overthrown in 417 B.C. and the democracy restored. Long walls were hastily built from Argos to the sea to guarantee her food supply from Athens. The Spartans marched out and destroyed the walls. But still Athenian influence was paramount in the city, and in 416 B.C. Alcibiades appeared there and deported "suspects" to the Aegean islands.[{530}] But Argos was not likely to take the field again, though she might do what little was possible in other ways to help Athens. And in any case Alcibiades had found the Argive soldier a very broken reed. Athenian politics were simplified. The old question remained—Is war bound to come again? Mantinea had at least made this still more likely.

Nicias still denied it, and hoped to preserve the official peace with Sparta still unbroken. The battle of Mantinea, the 200 Athenian dead, had not broken it officially!

But Alcibiades grew more and more insistent to the contrary. Baffled in his first strategy of offence, he still has just one other to propose. His thoughts turn westwards, to Italy, to Sicily, to Carthage, whither so many men's thoughts have long since been turning. The Congress at Gela had been a bad check. But need it be more than a temporary set-back? Let Athens revive her enterprise on a far greater scale. Already Syracuse is playing the tyrant again. Renewed appeals for help from her old allies in Sicily begin to reach Athens. Conquer Syracuse. Appropriate Sicily. Add Greek Italy. Then sail upon the dependencies of Carthage. Deal finally with Carthage herself. Queen of the entire West, disposing at her pleasure of all the vast resources of the West, then let Athens see who in the homeland would dare oppose her longer!

For many years these schemes had flitted through many a young Athenian's mind. Nicias had reason to grow scared of this "ill-fated passion" for Sicily, as older men would call it. But what alternative had he to offer, at least to distract the attention of these worrying youngsters who would be doing *something*? Mere futile inaction—this was a joyful prerogative of a state of peace. But Alcibiades would not let things be, and his eager adherents grew in number day

by day. “Remember your oath in Agraulos’ Temple,” he bade each year’s recruits. “Now the oath”, Plutarch explains, “is that they will take wheat, barley, vines, and olives as the sole boundaries of Attica. All fruitful lands, they were taught, belonged to Athens.” The lads clustered round the veterans, listening with eager ears to their tales of the magic Eldorado of the West. Nicias saw the little groups of youngsters gathered in exercise place and parade ground, with their heads bent down, drawing plans of Sicily on the ground, and putting Libya and Carthage into their dusty maps. What alternative had he to offer these young hotheads?{531}

In 416 B.C. the defiant little island of Melos, pleading in vain to be allowed neutrality, was blockaded, and, in the winter, captured by treachery and surrender. The Athenians butchered all the men and enslaved the women and children. So barbarous an outrage on humanity seems to have stirred Thucydides himself to invent a famous dialogue and in it set forward the Athenian plea that Might and Might alone is Right. He sets the doctrine forth so nakedly that every honest reader with a conscience must have expected a great vengeance from Heaven to follow.{532} Then at once follows the long story of the Sicilian Expedition. Is not this the vengeance, suggested by its very place in the narrative? It is not suggested otherwise by Thucydides. He is not Herodotus. The gods side with the larger battalions. Piety is no excuse for lack of preparations or for the absence of intelligence. It is the facts which are dramatic and not the calm self-possessed historian. Thucydides is more dispassionately “modern” than many an enthusiastic sentimentalist of Charles Kingsley’s noble school today. Some consciences in Athens even were pricked by the barbarity. Alcibiades had supported the decree of vengeance on the islanders of Melos. Men blamed him most for it.{533} But he had just dazzled all men by his Olympia display, and his partisans bade their conscience sleep. In this same winter the Argives began again to raid their neighbours’ lands, even affronting Sparta upon the border land. But Alcibiades was no longer to be attracted to enterprise on land. The West was calling.

What alternative had Nicias to offer? He did offer an alternative at the great debate concerning Sicily in the spring of 415 B.C. And here Thucydides somewhat misleads his readers.

For he allows Nicias to set forth his rival “Chalcidic policy” almost as if it were a new policy worth trying energetically.{534} In itself of course it was the old familiar Periclean plea again—Keep a tight hold of the subject allies. In Nicias’ mouth it takes the form—Reconquer your old Empire in the north-east before you try to conquer a new Empire in the West. In this form it seems likely to appeal forcibly to every man of common sense.

But there is a fact which Thucydides himself does not emphasise, nor does he permit any of his speakers in the great debate to make allusion to it. Only from his own most casual remarks and from other curious sources of information does this fact stand out clearly—that the Athenians for some years past have been experimenting again and again with this rival "Chalcidic policy". Practically, apart from Mantinea and Melos—which cannot be considered great efforts—they have been doing nothing else except "hammer away" in the north-east. And all their hammering, their expenditure of men and ships and money, has had for its result precisely nothing. No wonder that when in the great debate the old statesman propounded solemnly once more his "Chalcidice—conquest policy" he discovered that the Assembly would have nothing more to do with it. Futile—it was futile beyond all words. Here was the glamour of the West. Here was the city ready and able to equip such an Armada as had never sailed from Peiraeus before. Nicias prates about reconquering the revolted cities of the north-east. The Athenians are quite naturally sick to death of the very mention of the accursed towns.

In the summer of 418 one of their tried generals, Euthydemus, and others are, it seems, on duty in Thrace. Thucydides says nothing of this. The expedition was "a mere episode with no influence on the war", says Busolt in apology. If only 1300 men are sent at the same time to battle in Arcadia, it had no right to be a mere episode. If you sacrifice your political opponent's strategy to pursue your own, you might at least make something of your own.{535}

Mantinea continued to cost Athens dear. In the winter after the battle Perdiccas King of Macedon and the Chalcidic cities joined the new alliance between Sparta and Argos.{536} Presently the town of Dium by Athos in Chalcidice revolted.{537} Nicias himself, in the summer of 417 B.C., was instructed to proceed to the district. His expedition was a mere fiasco. The wily Perdiccas protested his goodwill long enough to secure himself from being made the object of Nicias' attention. Then he withdrew his co-operation, and Nicias came to the conclusion that he had better himself return home. He had achieved absolutely nothing.{538}

The indignant Athenians sent another general, Chaeremon, in the following winter to blockade the Macedonian coast.{539} This failed to impress the king. A year later, therefore, some Athenian cavalry were landed at Methone to help some exiles, victims of Perdiccas' animosity, to plunder the countryside.{540} Sparta sent bidding her Chalcidian allies take the field. They refused. Perdiccas presently patched up his frayed friendship with Athens once more, and, long after the expedition had sailed to Sicily, appeared to help an Athenian general, Evetion, besiege Amphipolis. They failed to take Amphipolis.{541} The Athenians never retook

Amphipolis.

Small wonder that “Go and fight Thrace-way” became almost a comic catchword at this time in the streets of Athens. In Aristophanes’ merry play the *Birds* (set on the stage in the spring of 414 B.C.) the hero, Peisthetaerus, in his “City of the birds”, is dealing out wings to humans who come to beg for them. There hurries in a rascally youngster asking to be fitted out:

> “In fact, I’m gone bird-mad, and fly, and long
> To dwell with you and hunger for your laws.”

Says the other:

> “Which of our laws? For birds have many laws.”

The lad answers:

> “All! All! But most of all that jolly law
> Which lets a youngster throttle and beat his father.”

“Aye,” Peisthetaerus replies scathingly:

> “If a cockerel beat his father here
> We do indeed account him quite a—Man.”

The youth is persistent:

> “That’s why I moved up hither and would fain
> Throttle my father and get all he has.”

But in the upshot Peisthetaerus gently dissuades him:

> “Don’t beat your father, lad, but take this wing,
> And grasp this spur of battle in your hand,
> And think this crest a game-cock’s martial comb.
> Now march, keep guard, live on your soldier’s pay,
> And let your father be. If you want fighting,
> Fly off to Thraceward regions, and fight there.”

As the lad struts away, crying:

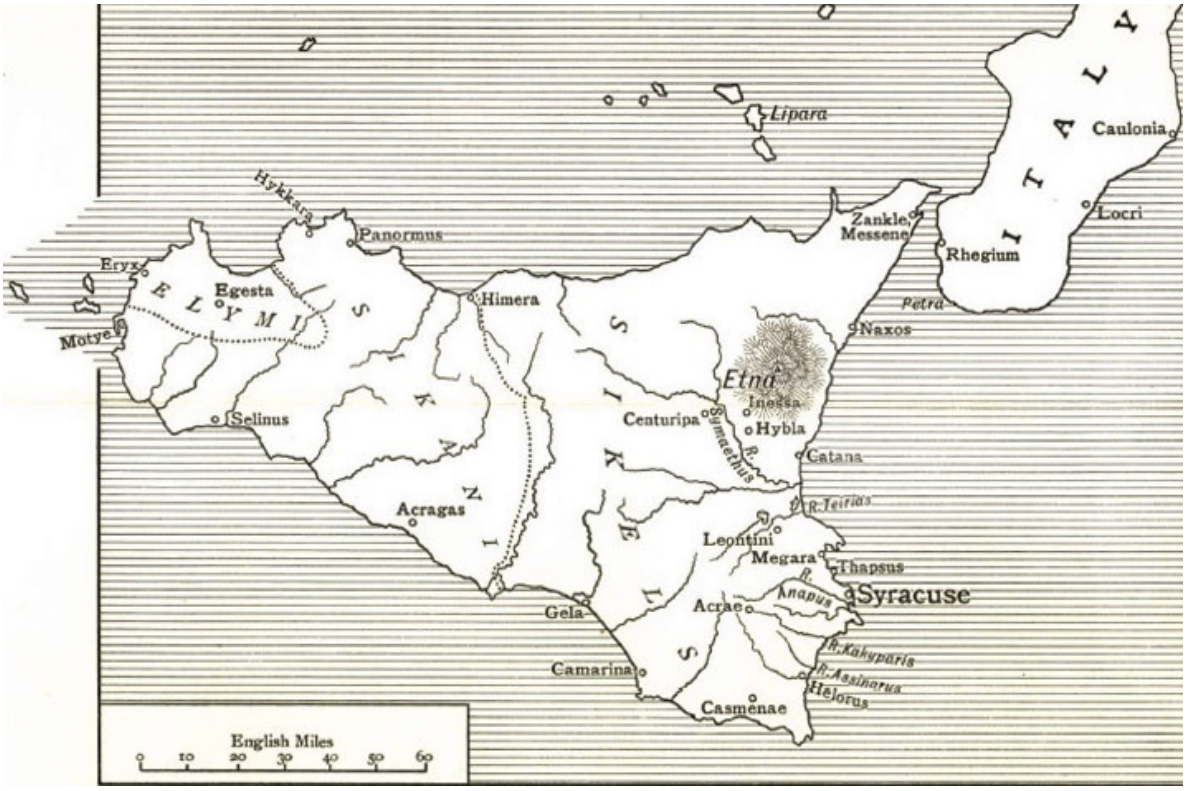
> “By Dionysus, I believe you’re right.
> I’ll do it too,”

the man looks after him. “Fine sense, by Zeus,” he mutters.{542}

Such was the record of the “Chalcidic policy” which Nicias in the fateful year 415 B.C. blandly recommended once more as the alternative to the “Western policy” of Alcibiades. Ever since the capture of Scione in 421 B.C. it had been a story of muddle, incompetence, futility, and failure. And as for hurting or checking Sparta—the Chalcidic policy would be as likely to damage her as the naked St. George of the English sovereign with his stumpy sword is likely to discommode the dragon. There can be small reason for surprise that the Athenians by a huge majority brushed aside all Nicias’ admonitions and counter proposals and voted with ever-increasing enthusiasm to send the expedition to Sicily. Who of us present in the Athenian Assembly that spring morning in the year 415 B.C. would not have voted for Alcibiades?

So the long ships sailed.

**SICILY**



## CHAPTER IX—SYRACUSE

### *§ 1. Alcibiades' Sicilian policy*

IN the year 416 B.C. the small town of Egesta in the west of Sicily sent to Athens, her old ally, begging for help against her enemy, the Dorian city of Selinus. Egesta was suffering sorely from the men of Selinus and from the Syracusans who were helping the latter. She promised to pay the whole expense of the expedition to her relief. Her envoys so far prevailed by importunity that the Athenians despatched commissioners to investigate the state of affairs and, more especially, to discover whether Egesta really was wealthy enough to pay.{543}

In the spring of 415 B.C. the commissioners returned to Athens with glowing accounts of the riches of the city. The temples were full of silver offerings, they said. They had been royally entertained, and at every house there had been displayed the most lavish profusion of gold and silver plate. There was no doubt in their simple minds that Egesta was wealthy. They were tricked. The ingenious citizens borrowed largely from their neighbours and also had quietly transferred the plate from house to house as needed. The commissioners, men of polite Athenian manners, had not scrutinised each host's dinner service too closely. After all, one tankard is very like another. With them came other men of Egesta, bringing sixty talents earnest money. This was a month's pay for the 60 ships which they hoped to get.{544}

The Athenian people were convinced. A practical opportunity of interference in the West had at last arisen. The Assembly voted an expedition of 60 ships, and appointed Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lamachus (a tried and brave soldier of twenty years' experience) to the command, Nicias much against his will.

Five days later a second Assembly was held to consider details. Nicias was allowed by the President to raise the previous question. This was illegal. In Athens, as has been said of the French Chamber, no orator wishing to speak was prevented by the rules of procedure. His eloquence was unavailing, Alcibiades made a spirited and a convincing reply. The original decision was confirmed.{545} Nicias, quite tireless in words, had tried again to dissuade the people by enlarging upon the magnitude of the armament required for success. He was promptly told to state his requirements in detail. To his regret, he and his colleagues were given *carte blanche* to make the expedition of any size they thought fit. The vote was unanimous, the enthusiasm of old and young alike was intense. The levy began. No notice was taken of Nicias' offer to resign his own command. Resignation was becoming with him a quite

incurable habit. But the people trusted him. He was a skilled engineer officer,[{546}] and the appointment of such an expert was especially desirable when ideas of besieging Syracuse eventually were in the forefront of men's minds. He had never met with any serious reverse yet. He was safe and cautious. He had the influence with the troops which Lamachus, who was a poor man, lacked, and the sobriety of judgment with which Alcibiades could not be credited. He would check all rashness. He was in fact a most excellent drag on the wheel and sent the whole machine in due course into the ditch. The Athenians thought that their expeditionary machine needed a brake. They fitted it with the most powerful and the stiffest brake in their whole war workshop.

Criticism, both of the policy and of Alcibiades its champion, has been bitter. It may be examined briefly and dispassionately.

It was a scheme for the conquest of Greek Italy, of Sicily, of Carthage and the Carthaginian Empire. The achievement of the scheme would indubitably have made Athens for the time being mistress of Hellas.

"It stands condemned by its failure, and Alcibiades with it."

This is at least not fair to Alcibiades in so far as he is not allowed, as will be seen, to attempt to carry it out after a very early stage in its proceedings. The mistakes of Nicias, the lamentable death of Lamachus in battle, cannot be fastened upon him. A hypothesis seems justified.

*If* Alcibiades had been retained in his command, could the expedition have captured Syracuse?

Indubitably, yes. It is true that Syracuse and her Dorian allies in Sicily were rich in resources and in men. Syracuse herself had 8000 hoplites and 1000 cavalry.[{547}] But she had bitter local enemies, both Greek and native. She was rent with faction and suspicion. She was incredulous of attack, boastful, and quite unprepared. And—she had fifteen generals. Only Nicias' blunders saved her from the ultimate consequences of her unpreparedness.

"Supposing the Athenians *had* taken Syracuse and the rest of Sicily had then at once submitted (this last is admittedly likely), Athens could never have retained her grip on the island." Within a few years an enormous Carthaginian invading army lands in the west of Sicily. Distant Athens could never have made head against this.

This is true. But it is no sound criticism of the policy unless the peril from Carthage could reasonably have been anticipated in 415 B.C. Every known fact disproves this. The Athenians at the time believed that Carthage was herself living in constant dread of attack at home. Everyone was ignorant of the strength of Carthage, and had been ignorant for many years. The historian Herodotus had belittled the importance of her onslaught on Sicily in 480 B.C. because he found men in the homeland talk so little of it or so slightingly of it in comparison with the Persian menace. For two generations of men nothing had been heard of Carthage. No Athenian in 415 B.C. had any reason whatever for anticipating the storm which burst upon hapless Sicily five years later.

"Leave Carthage out of account then. Even without her intervention Athens could never have kept control of Sicily for long."

This is probably true—but it is off the point. Athens could have retained control long enough, long enough for her fleet to come proudly home, in all men's eyes victorious. What was wanted was one great conspicuous success. The capture of Syracuse would have been exactly this success. Sphacteria and Mantinea are the most conclusive proofs of the immediate and powerful influence of one single military achievement in Greek warfare. The news of the capitulation of Syracuse must have affected profoundly even the cities of Chalcidice. No doubt an Athenian triumph in Sicily would have left Sparta's own strength on land unaffected. But even Sparta relied largely upon the keenness and the enthusiasm of her many allies and these could not have survived the shock. Then, if ever, the "moral atmosphere" in war would have been decisive. In conquering distant Syracuse Athens would *not* have been "losing Picardy in Palestine".

Alcibiades' Sicilian policy was one of pure, of wilful ambition. It had no shadow of moral justification. It could not plead military necessity. Unlike Spanish conquests, it could not even take shelter under the sanction of religion. It had every reasonable prospect of succeeding, and, like the German attack on France, it came within an ace of success.

"The enthusiasm of the majority was so overwhelming", writes Thucydides, "that if any man *did* disapprove he was afraid of being thought unpatriotic if he voted against the expedition, and so he held his peace."{548} Nicias' own opposition had been based on grounds of expediency and upon no other grounds. He had succumbed.

Just one man, the loneliest figure in the history of Greek literature, made his protest, and on

higher grounds. In the spring of 415 B.C. Euripides produced his tragedy, *The Trojan Women*. "And while the gods of the prologue were prophesying destruction at sea for the sackers of Troy, the fleet of the sackers of Melos, flushed with conquest and marked by a slight but unforgettable taint of sacrilege, was actually preparing to set sail for its fatal enterprise against Sicily."{549}

"Not of course", the greatest of our Oxford humanists continues, "that we have in the *Troades* a case of political allusion. Far from it. Euripides does not mean Melos when he says Troy, nor mean Alcibiades' fleet when he speaks of Agamemnon's, But he writes under the influence of a year which to him, as to Thucydides, had been filled full of indignant pity and of dire foreboding. This tragedy is perhaps, in European literature, the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind exalted into a moving principle."

This tragedy, which under German handling becomes one of intolerable lacrimosity, is instinct with pity and terror under the inspiration of the English poetic genius. Athens sails against Syracuse:

"So the days waned, and armies on the shore
Of Simois stood and strove and died. Wherefore?
No man had moved their landmarks; none had shook
Their walled towns.—And they whom Ares took
Had never seen their children: no wife came
With gentle arms to shroud the limbs of them
For burial, in a strange and angry earth
Laid dead. And there, at home, the same long dearth:
Women that lonely died, and aged men
Waiting for sons that ne'er should turn again,
Nor know their graves, nor pour drink-offerings
To still the unslaked dust. These be the things

The conquering Greek hath won!

But we—what pride,
What praise of men were sweeter?—fighting died
To save our people. And when war was red
Around us, friends upbore the gentle dead
Home, and dear women's hands about them wound
White shrouds, and here they sleep in the old ground
Belovèd. And the rest long days fought on,
Dwelling with wives and children, not alone
And joyless, like these Greeks."

* * * * *

"Would ye be wise, ye Cities, fly from war!
Yet if war come, there is a crown in death
For her that striveth well and perisheth
Unstained: to die in evil were the stain![{550}]"

Lament, lament over the city:

"Sing for the Great City
That falleth, falleth to be
A shadow, a fire departed.
Even as the sound of a song
Left by the way, but long
Remembered, a tune of tears
Falling where no man hears
In the old house, as rain,
For things loved of yore:
But the dead hath lost his pain
And weeps no more."[{551}]

"So all with one voice before setting sail offered up the customary prayers. On every deck both officers and men, mingling wine in bowls, made libations from vessels of gold and silver. The multitude of citizens and other well-wishers who were looking on from the land joined in the prayer. The crews raised the Paean, and, when the libations were ended, put to sea."[{552}]

"Lo, I have seen the open hand of God;
And in it nothing, nothing, save the rod
Of mine affliction, and the eternal hate,
Beyond all lands, chosen and lifted great,
For Troy. Vain, vain were prayer and incense-swell
And bulls' blood on the altars!...All is well.
Had He not turned us in His hand, and thrust
Our high things low, and shook our hills as dust,
We had not been this splendour, and our wrong
An everlasting music for the song
Of earth and heaven!"[{553}]

Athens the mighty, the Imperial City, violet-crowned Athens, sails forth conquering and to conquer.

Andromache cries to Hector's aged mother:

"Mother of him of old, whose mighty spear

Smote Greeks like chaff, see'st thou what things are here?"

Hecuba makes reply:

"I see God's hand, that buildeth a great crown
For littleness, and hath cast the mighty down."{554}

In the prologue the God Poseidon vanishes with words of warning. Surely in them the poet himself speaks:

"How are ye blind
Ye treaders down of cities, ye that cast
Temples to desolation, and lay waste
Tombs, the untrodden sanctuaries where lie
The ancient dead—yourselves so soon to die!"{555}

But beyond the warning there is the brooding atmosphere of infinite sorrow, of infinite pity. The Gods are merciless. The dead cannot hear. Shall not man be more merciful than God to his brother man? Surely Euripides is making his passionate appeal to the very soul of the Athenians?

Troy burns, and the poet ends his tragedy:

"Out on the smoke she goeth,
And her name no man knoweth;
And the cloud is northward, southward; Troy is gone for ever!
All is gone!
Wrath in the earth and quaking and a flood that sweepeth all,
And passeth on!
Farewell—
Farewell from parting lips
Farewell! Come, I and thou,
Whatso may wait us now,
Forth to the long Greek ships
And the sea's foaming."{556}

And the Athenians, on plunder and conquest bent, sped down to the sea's foaming, never again to

"Sleep at last among the fields of home,"

while their great poet "lived ever after in a deepening atmosphere of strife and even of hatred,

down to the day when, ‘because almost all in Athens rejoiced at his suffering’, he took his way to the remote valley of Macedon to write the *Bacchae* and to die”.[{557}]

> “Dear is Peace,”

cries the Theban herald in the *Suppliants*,

> “She walks her ways and sees
> No haunting Spirit of Judgment. Glad is she
> With noise of happy children, running free
> With corn and oil. And we, so vile we are,
> Forget, and cast her off, and call for War,
> City on city, man on man, to break
> Weak things to obey us for our greatness’ sake!”[{558}]

### *§ 2. The mutilation of the Hermae*[{559}]

On a night in May, just before the expedition was ready to sail, the rudely carved stone busts of the God Hermes, set on short pillars, standing at the doorways of temples and of private houses in the city of Athens, were, all but one, defaced and mutilated. The extraordinary outrage greatly excited the Athenians. It was a bad omen for the expedition. They also firmly believed it was proof of a conspiracy to overthrow the democracy.

A crop of informers started up. They threw no light whatever on the outrage, but told tales of the recent mutilation of other statues at the hands of some youths in a drunken frolic, and of “repeated profanations” of the holy “Mysteries”, which, they said, were parodied in private houses. Of this last impiety Alcibiades was denounced by name. His political enemies instantly leapt at the opportunity. They connected together the mutilation of the Hermae with the profanation of the Mysteries, and declared that Alcibiades was at the bottom of both impieties, and wished to upset the democracy. The muddled Athenians found it extremely difficult to separate the two charges—which were in fact entirely distinct—ever afterwards.

Alcibiades demanded an immediate trial. That he was guilty of the mutilation is so ridiculous a charge—who was less likely to wish for an evil omen of the kind?—that no one has ever seriously entertained it. In actual fact it never was brought against him in any other way than that of malicious gossip. That the Mysteries had been parodied at a dinner-party when he was present was a circumstantial story—told many years later, when the name of his host, one Pulytion, was given. It may, or may not, be true. But he demanded trial of any and

every charge of the kind before the expedition sailed. His reasons for this should have appealed to any Athenian of ordinary common sense. His enemies, however, were in no mind to see this happen. The sailors and soldiers of the fleet were devoted to him. There was little chance of securing his condemnation while these remained in Athens. In his and their absence, however, his foes were confident of being able quite easily to work up the feelings of the mob to fever pitch. Then he should be recalled to stand his trial for impiety when he was by that time practically condemned already. They succeeded in persuading the people. Alcibiades sailed with this grave charge hanging over his head, pledged to return for trial within a certain number of days.

This most curious outrage led in its consequences to the ruin of the whole expedition. In the absence of the fleet, the excitement grew apace. Wholesale arrests were made. A mania of suspicion seized the Athenians akin to that which maddened London at the time of the "Plot" of Titus Oates.

"At last", says Thucydides, "one of the prisoners, who was believed to be deeply implicated, was induced by a fellow-prisoner to make a confession. Whether it was true or false I cannot say. Opinions are divided. No man knew at the time, no man knows to this day, who the offenders were."{560}

This prisoner, whose name was Andocides, sixteen years later delivered a long exculpatory speech "On the Mysteries" which still survives. It has only left the matter more confused than ever. In making his confession he produced a long list containing the names of those guilty of the mutilation of the Hermae. Alcibiades' name was *not* on the list. The Athenians were delighted. They released all other prisoners, including Andocides himself, and set to work to bring to trial and execute all on the list who could be caught. Some had fled. These were sentenced to death *in absentia* and a reward was offered to anyone who killed any of them.

"No one," declares Thucydides with cynical good sense—"No one can say whether the sufferers were justly punished; but the beneficial effect on the city at the time cannot be denied."{561}

Still entirely unable to separate in their minds the Hermae and the Mysteries, moved by every wind of rumour, catching at every straw of suspicion, the Athenians "determined to have Alcibiades tried and executed"{562} as well. They sent the ship *Salaminia* to fetch him home for this mockery of a trial. He was not to be arrested on the spot in Sicily, lest the arrest should have unfortunate consequences in the expeditionary force. He was just to obey orders and come home without any fuss. When he did not appear (he having very wisely given the crew of

the *Salaminia* the slip at Thurii), the Athenians sentenced him to death.

There are not a few other accounts of this episode besides the long precise story of Thucydides and Andocides' own apology. They are confused and contradictory. They cannot even agree about the moon. The informer and blackmailer, Diokleides, gave evidence that he saw the faces of the perpetrators of the outrage by the light of the full moon.{563} Two ancient writers declare positively that the moon was new at the time.{564} The name of one of Alcibiades' enemies has been added to Thucydides' story. Androcles the radical—assassinated later in 411 B.C. by some youthful conspirators who hoped to please Alcibiades thereby—was foremost in denouncing him and in securing his condemnation.{565} But the actual mover of the impeachment was Thessalus, son of Cimon, the Conservative noble, the hereditary enemy of all the Alcmaeonid House.{566} Here is exactly the same coalition of radical and conservative, of jealous demagogue and malignant "Philaid", which once overthrew Pericles, and now sought to destroy another great "Alcmaeonid". So unlovely a city of hatreds is Athens the cultured, the "School of Hellas".

But to this day no one is advanced one single inch along the road of certainty beyond Thucydides' clear and positive statement, "No man knows".

Who mutilated the Hermae and why did they do it?

There are four answers in chief made to this insoluble question.

Corinthians in Athens did the crime with intent so to scare the Athenians by the evil omen that they would cancel the expedition. So the Corinthians would save their colony Syracuse. {567}

This is a popular view in ancient writers. It comes to some grief on the question—could the Corinthians possibly manage it? And it is exactly the defence to be invented then or later by Athenians accused of the crime or by their friends.

It was a mere drunken frolic of roistering youths, and had no secret motive at all.{568}

It is objected that there were too many Hermae for this. The "vandalism" must have been the work of an organised band.{569} Now merry youngsters may paint Oxford "Caesars" red when the victim busts are conveniently near together. But all over the city——?

It was an oligarchic plot, intended either to overthrow the democracy (and this was what the Athenians of the time, both before and after the information of Andocides, firmly believed), or

to overthrow Alcibiades. For the democracy was safe so long as Alcibiades lived! This is maintained by an Athenian orator, Isocrates, in the following century. As his business is to chant the praises of Alcibiades, his curious defence has failed to carry conviction to any one in later days.

And against the current belief in an oligarchic plot, the intrinsic absurdity of this contends in endless respects. Beloch's argument is unanswerable. "What conspirators would have been such fools as to call such public attention to their proceedings?"{570} Moreover the *Cui bono?* argument is here of force. The supposed oligarchs were the only victims of the plot, and these suffered heavily.

There remains the last explanation. It was a democratic plot, formed in order to get rid of Alcibiades—in which object it was entirely successful. The *Cui bono?* argument may here be applied to support the view. It *was* the extreme radical leader who did benefit. And also the chief victim, Alcibiades, quite certainly believed himself that this was the true explanation.

Its difficulty is the devious ingenuity displayed by the Conspirators throughout. They mutilate the Hermae—not in order to accuse Alcibiades directly of this—but to drag in the wholly irrelevant matter of the Mysteries, and so at last to involve their victim.

Oligarchs or Democrats? Supernaturally stupid Oligarch, or diabolically ingenious Democrat? Conspirators incurably short-sighted or incredibly far-sighted?

Perhaps the "drunken youngsters" win the day after all. "Ein Bubenstreich, kein politisches Manöver"—so Eduard Meyer dismisses it—"a knavish trick, not a political manœuvre."{571} After all, lampposts have suffered in various parts of the same small town on a night of general excitement, even with police to guard them. But then a lamppost is not a representation of Divinity.

### *§ 3. The first year's operations against Syracuse*{572}

Women on the housetops were wailing for dead Adonis, drowning with their shrill frenzied cries the hoarse voice of a demagogue as he ranted in the Assembly, when the Armada put out to sea.{573} It had been magnificently equipped.

> "Never", says Thucydides, "had a greater expedition been sent from the homeland; never was there an enterprise such as this so furnished as to warrant the greatest hopes for the future."{574}

Rumours of its coming reached Syracuse. Hermocrates suggested that their own fleet should sail to Tarentum and there lie in wait. This might scare the Athenians away. “Nicias”, he said, “will snatch at the first excuse to abandon the whole enterprise.” He was fiercely attacked by a radical speaker named Athenagoras. According to the English historian Freeman, the oration of Athenagoras was “the speech of an honest, thoughtful, and patriotic man, but a man not well informed as to the facts”.{575} A German calls the same speech an “effusion of brutal pride, presumptuous frivolity, ignorant bluster, threats, and abuse”.{576} After this, Athenagoras disappears from the story. He certainly was an egregious fool of a demagogue, and Thucydides drily enjoys the parade of his folly. But Hermocrates’ own proposal was itself strategically ridiculous. After two years’ strenuous activity Syracuse can muster 80 ships. To equip half the number and send them to Tarentum would have taken at least two months. Long before this the Athenians would have reached the Straits of Messina. And no one would have welcomed so early a chance for an initial success so eagerly as Alcibiades, had the fleets met one another. Syracuse after it would have collapsed at once. Hermocrates’ suggestion showed that no Syracusan had yet realised the extent of the peril.

The Armada mustered at Corcyra and then crossed to Rhegium. It now consisted of 136 warships carrying over 6400 troops (the great majority hoplites). There was a swarm of attendant vessels. From Corcyra three ships had been sent forward to Sicily to explore the situation in the island. They returned to Rhegium with the gloomy news that Egesta certainly could not pay. The hoax of the tankards was discovered. And at Rhegium itself the Athenians met with but a cool reception. The three admirals held a Council to consider the situation. Each had his own plan of operations.

Nicias proposed that they should stick rigidly by the proposed object of the expedition, and sail to Selinus to settle the Egesta-Selinus quarrel. If then Egesta would pay for everything, they would deliberate again. If not (and Nicias knew perfectly well that Egesta would not and could not pay), let them circumnavigate Sicily and so, after this display of Athens’ strength to all Sicilian cities and its encouragement to their friends, sail home again.{577}

To consider this strategy gravely is to waste time. It is politics, not war. As war, it is the old, old notion of the futile “impressive naval parade”. As politics—how many cities would be encouraged to throw in their lot with Athens by the sight of the stately Recessional of Athenian ships sailing past the harbour mouth? “It is a magnificent opportunity to join us. We don’t like these waters at all, and are off home as quick as may be. You will not see us *here*

again in a hurry." Doubtless Nicias cherished the notion that Alcibiades would be made the scapegoat of the Athenians' fury at so inglorious an ending to a noble effort.

Both Alcibiades and Lamachus meant war. But their strategies differed. Lamachus was for striking instantly at Syracuse. Alcibiades was for delay until they had collected their Sicilian allies, roused the native Sicels, taken Messina, and sent in their ultimatum to Syracuse and Selinus. If this was rejected (and if Alcibiades had a hand in framing its terms, it certainly was not likely to be acceptable), then they would attack Syracuse. The two admirals also differed, as was under the circumstances inevitable, as to the base of operations against Syracuse, Lamachus proposing the bare deserted site of Megara, only 10 miles away from that city, Alcibiades the rich and crowded city of Catana where were ample supplies and good docks, which lay 30 miles to the north of Syracuse. For an immediate attack Lamachus required neither supplies nor docks. For a more protracted campaign both were indispensable, and Catana was the nearest city to Syracuse which could furnish these.{578} When it came to a decision, Lamachus, unable to carry either of his colleagues with him, surrendered his own plan and, doubtless regarding it as distinctly second best, gave his vote to Alcibiades.{579} The latter's plan was therefore adopted. Alcibiades himself sailed across to Messina to try and win the city over. Sixty ships proceeded to Sicilian Naxos, and were admitted to the city. The rest of the fleet stayed for a while at Rhegium.

Modern opinion has almost unanimously approved of Lamachus' plan and condemned that of Alcibiades emphatically. Holm ascribes the latter to its author's unhappy passion for diplomacy. Curtius, quite ridiculously, suggests that he did not want a speedy victory. The English writers, Grote and Freeman, are more hesitating, dwelling on the political aspect of the matter at great length. All agree that the Council of War was one of the turning points of fate, and that had Lamachus been allowed his way the whole course of Greek history might have been changed. For Syracuse would have fallen then and there.{580}

It is just this which is highly doubtful. Can a fleet take a strongly walled city at the first rush? Could the English fleet have taken Constantinople even if it had forced the passage of the Hellespont? And if there *was* an initial check, that must have ended the matter. No one of the wavering cities of Sicily but would promptly have disclaimed sympathy for the enterprise, Catana included. The fleet would be friendless at its lonely desolate base. The purely military risk of the sudden dash might well seem too great. Syracuse, it is quite true, was unprepared and absurdly over-confident. Lamachus would have changed that confidence into extraordinary

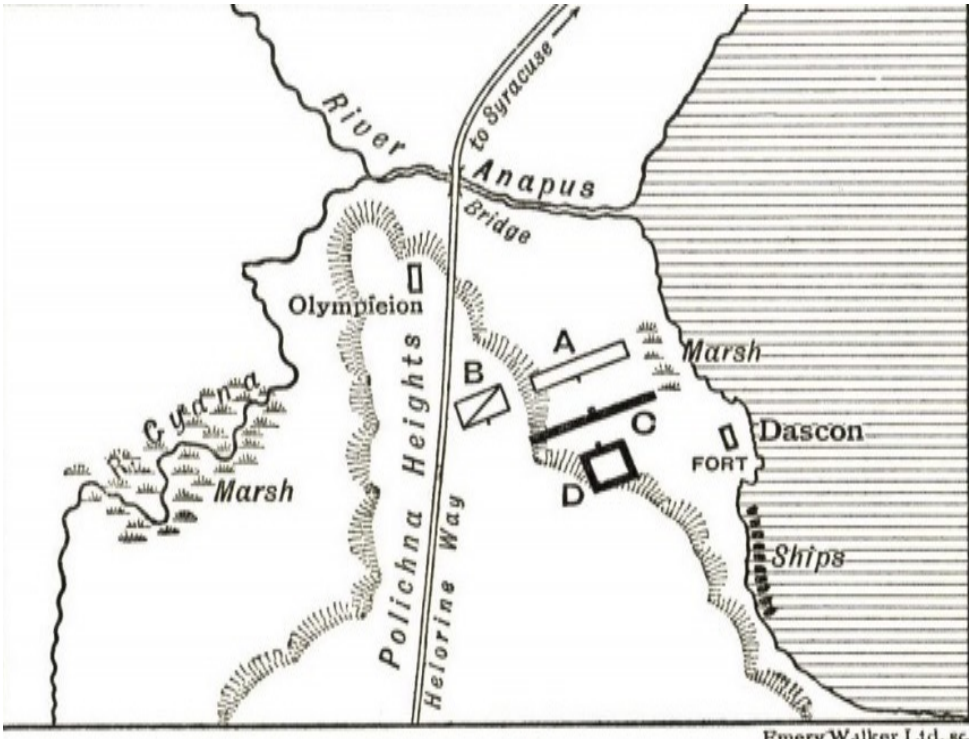
dismay in a moment. But city walls need no improvisation, and dismay need not open the gates. The delay enhanced the Syracusans' confidence. Thucydides censures Nicias (and not Alcibiades) for this.{581} As soon as the Athenian fleet *does* appear that confidence changes into despair. Despair did not open the gates. The psychological argument had been stressed too much. But Syracuse was at least forewarned of the coming attack and could not have been taken by surprise. Such surprise was really essential for the success of Lamachus' plan. Alcibiades' strategy was based on the principle of Sicily as a house divided against itself.{582} A sudden onset, a repulse—this indeed would have made Greek Sicily a unity, one hostile to the Athenian expedition. Catana was invaluable. The delay postponed the fall of Syracuse, but, not improbably, it alone made that fall possible. Perhaps after all Alcibiades was the better strategist of the two.

Messina refused to admit the Athenians within her walls, allowing them, however, a market outside. Catana shut them out. The now united fleet reconnoitred Syracuse from the sea and published manifestos. It then returned to Catana, surprised, and occupied the town. This was henceforth its base. From it the fleet sailed round the southern Sicilian promontory of Pachynus to Camarina. Camarina refused to admit the Athenians. Returning to Catana, the Athenians sent a landing party on shore near Syracuse which indulged in a brief skirmish with the Syracusan cavalry. So back to their base again.

The *Salaminia* trireme came sailing into Catana harbour with the orders to Alcibiades to return at once to Athens for his trial. Arrest him on the spot they dared not. Had he defied the order, who in that fleet would have said him nay? Then, returning later, conqueror of Syracuse, who at Athens would have talked of Mysteries? Anger, and never was anger more justifiable or more disastrous in its consequences, swept away any such thoughts of defiance.{583} He, and others accused with him, accompanied the *Salaminia* in his own ship to Thurii. There he landed. An acquaintance met him in the street there. "Will you not trust your country, Alcibiades?" he argued. "In all other things", he replied, "yes—but with my life, no! I would not trust my mother to vote about my life." He disappeared. They searched for him in vain. The *Salaminia* went home. Alcibiades in a small coasting ship reached the Peloponnese, an exile condemned to death. He went to Argos, where he had many friends. The Athenians sent to Argos demanding his surrender. He fled, with a safe-conduct, to Sparta. "I will show them that I am still alive," he said.{584} At Sparta he, Socrates' pupil, invented a new theory of patriotism. His master's subtle dialectic was not wasted.

"He is the true patriot", he declared to the bewildered Spartans, "not who, when unjustly exiled, refrains from attacking his country, but who in the warmth of his longing for her seeks to recover her without regard to the means. The country which I am now attacking is not my country. It is only my country when I have recovered her."{585}

Nicias and Lamachus remained, sharing the command. They explored the north coast of Sicily. Himera rejected them. They took a petty place, Hykkara. Nicias sailed on to Egesta and extracted 30 more talents from its melancholy citizens. The army marched back through the Sicel hills to Catana. The fleet sailed back. They sold their prisoners as slaves, realising 120 talents more. The troops marched eight miles up country against Hybla, and failed to take the town. They marched back to Catana. So ended the summer of 415 B.C.




A. *Syracusan Infantry, 16 deep*
B. *Syracusan Cavalry*
C. *Athenians and Argives (on left), 8 deep*
D. *Athenian hollow square, 8 deep*

In the winter there befell a battle on the shore of the Great Harbour of Syracuse, at Dascon, south of the city.{586} The Syracusan whole army was ingeniously lured out to march against Catana. Meanwhile the Athenian fleet sailed round to the Great Harbour and at dawn landed the army, which fortified Dascon promontory and broke down the one bridge over the river Anapus to the north by which the Helorine Way reached Syracuse. The Syracusan army, horse and foot, came hurrying back from Catana. The destroyed bridge did not perturb them. They encamped that evening at a shrine, the Olympieion, just beyond the road. Next day both armies

drew up in order of battle. Behind the Athenian line of battle was a hollow square, for reserve and reinforcement. Nicias made his speech and led his line to the attack. The Syracusans had not expected this at the moment and were caught off their guard. But they fought with spirit, men hurrying in driblets down the road from the city at their fastest speed to take their part in the fray. A thunderstorm broke over the battlefield, with a deluge of rain. This scared the Athenian raw recruits. “Experienced soldiers”, Thucydides adds, “ascribed the storm to the time of year and were much more scared at the prospect of not defeating the enemy.” On both wings the Syracusans were driven back, whereupon their centre fled. Their 1200 cavalry stopped any effective pursuit. Throughout the many months of the siege her cavalry never failed Syracuse. Nicias had won the day. He had slain 260 of the enemy and lost 50 of his own men. Next day the fleet took the victorious army on board again and all sailed back to Catana. Dascon lay once more lonely and quiet.

A German writer, Delbrück, in his *History of War*, has made some trivial and most unconvincing criticisms of Thucydides’ account of the Battle of Dascon.{587} The hollow square, as a reserve and rallying point if his front line was broken, was a novel but a sound device on the part of Nicias. And the Syracusan horse seem to have been posted on the only wing where the ground, though more hilly, was at least open. By the shore it was marshy and encumbered also by broken walls. The Athenians also, another old writer tells us, impeded the cavalry’s activity by strewing spiky caltrops on the ground to lame the enemy’s horses.{588} They had no horse of their own.

It was not a considerable battle and the Athenians made no use of their victory. It is not clear why they ever went to Dascon at all, unless by way of reconnaissance in force once again. They can hardly have meant permanently to fortify and garrison the promontory at the beginning of winter, although this has been suggested. An Oxford editor of Thucydides declares that “Nicias discovered that after all the position which he had been so anxious to secure was not suitable”.{589} The one solid use made of the battle was by the Syracusans, who seized the opportunity to reduce the number of their generals from fifteen to three.

In the spring of the following year 414 B.C. there arrived from Athens a few cavalrymen, 250 in number, to be horsed on the spot, and 300 talents. Native cavalry and others from Egesta brought the total strength of the mounted arm up to 650. After some preliminary excursions up country from Catana, the Athenian generals sailed to the coast just to the north of Syracuse, and occupied Leon and Thapsus. Now at last the investment of the city actually begins.{590}

### *§ 4. The siege of the city*[591]

The “old city” of Syracuse upon Ortygia Island was surrounded by a wall and impregnable. The larger upper town on Achradina to the north was similarly protected and similarly impregnable. The enemy were masters of the sea. So long as reinforcements and supplies could enter the city by land through the gates of the western wall of “Outer Town” or by the Helorine Way on the south, Syracuse could defy capture. To increase the circuit of their defences and the difficulty of investment, should this be attempted, the citizens in the winter of 415 B.C. enclosed with a new wall a large sacred precinct, that of Apollo Temenites, which lay on the slope of Epipolae crest just outside the wall of Outer Town. The course and the length of this new wall are matters of great doubt and dispute. It may have been extended north of the sacred precinct across the entire breadth of the plateau of Epipolae, and so have joined the wall of Outer Town at an angle at its northern extremity.[592] Or it may have done no more than enclose the precinct, in which case it formed a great bastion, whence sallies would be the more easy. They placed a garrison at Megara on outpost duty, and another at the Olympieion, and planted stakes on the seashore to make landings difficult. Their navy lay secure in the Lesser Harbour looking out seawards, but a set of stakes driven into the water on the side of the Great Harbour also afforded shelter to a portion of their available fleet.




One morning in the early spring of the year 414 B.C. Hermocrates and his fellow-generals held a review of the entire army on a meadow beside the bank of the Anapus. A picked body of 600 men was selected to act as special garrison of the plateau of Epipolae. They had scarcely been chosen when the news came that the enemy were already on its top. The Athenians had sailed from Catana round the promontory of Thapsus and disembarked a strong force at Leon, a mile away from the crest of the plateau. While their ships were then brought to anchor within the shelter of the curve of the promontory at Thapsus, their troops ran for the summit of the

ridge where the plateau sloped up to its highest point at Euryelus, between two and three miles from the nearest point of the wall of Outer Town. The 600 hastened to the ridge. They had three miles to run, and a long hill to climb, before they attacked. They were routed, and retired within the city leaving half their number and their corps commander dead upon the hill.

Next day the Athenians made good the ground which they had seized. They built a fort at Labdalon on the northern edge of the plateau looking towards Leon and the sea. This served as a depot for baggage and other encumbrances when they went out to fight. Then they proceeded methodically on their plan to invest Syracuse completely. Their intention was to construct a wall (single on the hill, double where it came down to the southern marshes) from the northern sea at Trogilus, east of Leon, to the Great Harbour just outside the city gate opening out on the Helorine Way. With this object in view, they first occupied a point called Syce on the ridge south-east of Labdalon, some hundred yards distant from the new wall round Temenites. Here they built a strong round fort—the “Circle” or Kuklos—driving off some Syracusan cavalry who tried to stop the work. This Round Fort was further strengthened by an outwork where it faced the city. Next day they started building their enclosing wall in both directions from the Round Fort, laying materials all along the shortest line to Trogilus to the north and finishing a short section of this wall, and beginning at the same time the wall to the south which was to reach the Great Harbour.

There was now only one course possible for the Syracusans. They must prevent the building of the enclosing wall. The plan they adopted was to run a cross wall out from their own city wall across the line of the enemy’s projected line of investment. This they immediately began.

Their first cross wall started from a wicket-gate in the wall just to the north of the new Temenites enclosure, and it ran out a short distance to the south of the Round Fort.[{593}] They built it with wooden towers, not sparing the sacred olive trees of the shrine for the purpose. A palisade linked it with the wall of the precinct. The Athenians, busy with their own building, left them alone. The Syracusans ran their cross wall out beyond the line of the Athenians’ southern wall, left a guard, and went home, the remainder of them, to rest. Then the enemy rushed the guard with a picked body of troops, while another force demonstrated menacingly outside the wall of Outer Town, and yet a third company, marching round the end of the cross wall, threatened the palisade. The guard fled to the Temenites, and the assailants promptly destroyed the whole of the cross wall, and pulled up the stakes of the palisade.

Next day the Syracusans saw the enemy’s southern wall advancing to the edge of the crest,

whence it must dip down to the level marshy ground lying on the north of the Anapus. Undismayed by their failure of the previous day they began a second and a longer cross wall running from the outer wall of the suburbs of the lower city straight across the flat.{594} This second work could only be a palisade and ditch. Both sides spent this day quietly building. At daybreak on the following day the Syracusans marched out in strength to guard their palisade. The enemy, leaving the end of their wall where it had reached the edge of the cliff, marched down also in strength to attack. Their general was Lamachus. Nicias was ill and was left behind in the Round Fort. There was fierce fighting at the palisade. The Syracusans were first driven back all along the line. Their right wing fled into the city, their left towards the river and its bridge. Pursued hotly by the enemy's right wing which hoped to cut the fugitives off at the bridge, they rallied, turned fiercely on the foe, and, thanks to their cavalry, routed the foremost of the pursuers, and charged the rest. Lamachus hastened to the rescue with a few troops from his own left wing under the city wall. He got entangled in the ditches of the marsh, was cut off, and slain. Meanwhile the routed Syracusan right took heart again and sallied out, some against the enemy's wall south of the Round Fort, some against the outwork of the Round Fort itself. Nicias had no troops in the fort. The storming party had already demolished the outwork when a blaze of fire sprang up in their faces. Nicias' servants at the orders of their sick general had set fire to every bit of spare timber, military engine, or rubbish lying between the outwork and the wall of the Round Fort itself. The Syracusans were checked by the flames and the Round Fort was saved. At the same time the battle in the meadows had gone against them, and their troops here were once more retreating. Then the entire Athenian fleet came proudly sailing round from Thapsus and entered the Great Harbour. It was the finishing stroke. Every Syracusan still outside the city walls hastened within their shelter. The enemy had won a second victory. Their own second cross wall was destroyed like the first. The enclosing wall was all but finished from the Round Fort to the Harbour. The Athenian ships took up their permanent station under the heights of Plemmyrion on the south of the Great Harbour. Nothing now could enter the beleaguered city by sea. Only one short section of the enemy's wall, that part of the wall north of the Round Fort to Trogilus which was yet to build, remained unfinished. The Syracusans' hearts failed them and they began to talk of peace. They deposed Hermocrates and his colleagues, electing three other generals in their place, and opened negotiations with Nicias.

For Lamachus was dead, and Nicias now remained in sole command.

But unexpected help was on the way, thanks to the enemy themselves. Alcibiades at Sparta was urgent that Syracuse must be saved, that reinforcements must be sent, that, if not a Spartan army, at least a Spartan general should be hurried to the spot. Gylippus was appointed. He was a man of action. While other naval forces mustered at the Isthmus, he sailed at once with a tiny squadron of four ships and reached Tarentum. Putting out presently to sea, he was hurled back by a gale to Tarentum again, and had to refit. There was ample time to intercept him. Nicias knew of his arrival. He thought little of four ships and did nothing. Later he repented and despatched four of his own ships to Rhegium to block the Straits. They came too late. Gylippus was through the narrows, sailing joyfully to Himera. Thanks to Nicias' folly, reinforcements reached Syracuse just in time to save the town from surrender.

More ships sailed from Corinth to the rescue. Their admiral, Gongylus of Eretria, started last, but arrived off Syracuse the first. No enemy squadron blocked the way. No enemy fleet hindered his putting in at Syracuse. He hurried up into the city. An Assembly was just about to meet to discuss the chance of peace. "More ships are on the way", he cried, "and Gylippus of Sparta comes by land." The Assembly was not held. There was no more talk of peace. Some would say that the coming of the *Goeben* to Constantinople was no less unfortunate for us.

Even so, the new army collected by the Spartan Gylippus at Himera ought never to have got through, at least without some desperate fighting, had the northern wall from the Round Fort to Trogilus been finished. But Nicias and his men had exhausted their energies. If the city was negotiating, why go on building under the sun of a hot Sicilian summer? The materials for the wall lay still scattered along the chosen line. The soldiers lay drowsily happy, some behind their southern wall, some in the Round Fort, some on shore by the ships in harbour. *Dolce far niente*. Gylippus and 3000 men marched through the Sicel country, storming one fort on the way, and so reached the Epipolae heights. Escorted from Euryelus by the exultant Syracusans and by Gongylus, they crossed the line of the unfinished enemy's wall and entered Syracuse without losing a man outside the city's walls.

The Spartan at once sent a herald, bidding the enemy leave Sicily within five days, and offering Nicias a truce for the purpose. The Athenian disdained to reply. Both armies formed for battle but forbore to engage. Next day Gylippus sent a force which captured the fort at Labdalon and put its garrison to the sword. He then set his men to work to build another, the third cross wall, which was to keep the top of the plateau and pass the Athenian investing line north of the Round Fort and the enemy's unfinished wall.[{595}] Nicias, meanwhile, built three

forts on his own account at Plemmyrion, south of the Great Harbour. The bulk of his army was on Epipolae. To hinder the Syracusans' wall building, which, if successful, would make the investment of the city impossible, he must fight. There were two battles in the angle of ground where wall neared wall north of the Round Fort. In the first Gylippus was worsted, in the second victorious. He ran his cross wall out beyond the end of the enemy's incompleted north wall. The builders found the material long since left lying there by the Athenians most useful. The latter were now "utterly deprived of all hope of investing the city". Their general remained strictly on the defensive, resolved to run no risks. Gylippus went off inland to collect more reinforcements. Ships sailed in from Corinth and elsewhere. The Syracusans, in recovered spirits, set their own ships afloat and began to practise. From their naval station under Plemmyrion the Athenians looked on. Winter came down upon the scene, upon the city comfortable and confident, upon the enemy clinging to their shore entrenchments, exposed to every buffet of weather and winter storm, precariously maintained by convoys from inland creeping cautiously down to the encampment on the shore under the heights of Polichna, fearful lest the Syracusan horse sally at any moment out upon them. Athenian foraging parties from the fleet, ranging ever farther afield in search for food and water, were continually cut up by the enterprising cavalry of the enemy. The timbers of their inactive warships began to rot, as month followed month. Such "fouling", though it varies in different ships even in the same water, always increases at an accelerated rate.[{596}] The crews steadily lost heart. Nicias, sick and despondent, won no victory to cheer his men. His one desire now was to get home safe again to Athens. The Athenians were now "besieged rather than besieging". Then Nicias wrote home.

His letter was frank and honest enough. "The people should know the facts," he said. He briefly told them of Gylippus' coming. "His own land army", he said, "could do nothing. His ships were rotting and he had no means of repair for them. The crews were inferior and even mutinous. Desertions of allies, servants, camp-followers, were innumerable. Reinforcements were continually coming to the enemy. His own supplies were most precarious. He himself suffered from a grievous illness. No one was to blame. All Sicily was hostile. Let them either recall the whole expedition or send another at once, by the beginning of spring, and one as large as the first, also plenty of money. And he begged them, let them recall him and send another general in his place."

It is a pitiful letter. For the misery disclosed, for Gylippus' and for Gongylus' arrival, for

the insubordination of the men, for the decay of the ships, for the choice of the exposed Plemmyrion station—where was no water—for the unfinished north wall, for any and every desperate evil, one man's incompetence was to blame, his own.

The folk at home decided to send the second armada. Eurymedon was sent at once with a few ships. Demosthenes, their one best general, was to follow with the rest. The two were to join Nicias in his command. The old general was neither superseded nor recalled.

Eduard Meyer seems alone among modern historians when he approves the Athenians' determination to send the reinforcements. Retreat at that stage, he thinks, would have been nothing better than a proclamation of bankruptcy.{597} Elsewhere there is a chorus of condemnation, culminating in Freeman's shriek:

> "The second Athenian expedition against Syracuse stands forth like the first among the most memorable instances of human folly...It was the vote of a people who obstinately clave to a purpose which they had once taken up, though its folly, its madness, had been fully proved."{598}

The criticism here of the first expedition is utterly unsound: that of the second is very doubtful. The risk was the greater in that the sending of the second fleet reduced Athens' maritime strength in home waters to an actual equality with that of the Peloponnesians for the first time in the history of the war. But the fact remains that, even if a Demosthenes could not take Syracuse, yet he could and would have brought the whole fleet safely back. Athens would have failed in Sicily. She still could have defied all her enemies at home with these of Sicily added. "One last try." The sentiment makes so powerful and so reasonable an appeal that we ourselves voting in the Athenian Assembly that winter day would surely have sent Demosthenes and ourselves have joined his noble fleet. But would we have kept Nicias, against his own pathetic plea, in his command? What reasons persuaded the Athenians to this madness? His failures, his manifest incompetence, his piety, his sickness, his old age, his despair? Are his local knowledge and his engineering skill so indispensable?

Of all Lord Kitchener's services to his country, his resolute decision to evacuate Gallipoli was not the least. But the analogy is unsound. How badly did we not need the men elsewhere? Reinforcement was impossible, success beyond the reach of hope. Athens had still spare ships and troops enough. Even after her "second try" evacuation was still possible. The English soldier's command was absolute, and none could question his grim decision. Demosthenes must yield to the weak obstinacy of an equal colleague on the spot.

### *§ 5. The Syracusan triumph*[{599}]

In the spring of 413 B.C. Gylippus returned to Syracuse bringing still more reinforcements. Encouraged by him and by their own leader Hermocrates, now again restored to favour, the Syracusans resolved at last to challenge the enemy for the mastery of the Great Harbour.

They disposed of a navy of 80 ships. Thirty-five of these lay under shelter of the stakes in the north recess of the harbour under the city front, securely guarded against hostile attack. The remainder were anchored in the Lesser Harbour where was the Syracusan naval arsenal fronting the open sea. Orders were given to the latter to proceed round Ortygia, and enter the Great Harbour. There they were to be joined by the 35, and the united fleet was to move against the Athenian ships where these were moored on the open beach under Plemmyrion. Simultaneously the land army under Gylippus was to march to the assault of the three Athenian forts which had been built upon this promontory to serve as storehouses and as an additional protection to the fleet which lay beneath them.

Gylippus for his part succeeded brilliantly. The forts were carried by storm. Two were then destroyed and the third was retained by the victors. The Athenian forces on the shore were confined more straitly than ever to the beach. They had also lost great store of corn in the forts and the sails and fittings of as many as 40 of their triremes, besides much other property and equipment. Flushed with victory the Syracusan troops had even descended to the shore and taken three enemy ships which were lying high and dry on the strand.

Meanwhile, however, the naval enterprise had miscarried. Informed of the Syracusans' movements, the Athenians promptly manned 60 ships, and directed 25 against the 35 Syracusan which had moved out into the open water of the Great Harbour, and detailed the other 35 to block the harbour mouth against the 45 which were trying to enter. There was stubborn fighting by sea at last, and for some time the Syracusan squadron within the harbour had the best of it. But their friends fell into disorder as they strove to force an entrance and were routed, involving the inner squadron in the same defeat. Victory rested again with the Athenians, who captured 11 enemy ships and lost only three of their own. But it was all confused mêlée fighting. There was no room for the manœuvring in which the Athenian sailor delighted. The ships too with their foul bottoms moved sluggishly through the water. In the first winter Nicias had egregiously failed to careen and scrape them, as he might have done in Catana dockyard. In the second winter there was no chance for this or for any sorely needed repairs in their open station under Plemmyrion. The weeds grew apace. When the Armada left Peiraeus two years

ago, it had numbered 150 triremes in perfect condition. One hundred and thirty-four triremes, with many attendant craft, had crossed from Corcyra to Sicily. The fleet had suffered no loss in battle. Nicias can muster a sorry 60 only, in a hurry, ready to fight the “first sea battle” in the spring of 413 B.C. Plemmyrion too was lost, and the only land in the entire circuit of the Great Harbour friendly to the Athenians was that on which their army was actually encamped. Despite their victory the Athenians were in no position to guarantee the safe entry of convoys into the Great Harbour. Misfortunes also befell them at a distance. A fleet of merchantmen bringing sorely needed supplies was caught and destroyed off the Italian coast. Their very fleet on Plemmyrion beach was dangerously exposed. This peril, at least, Nicias strove to lessen. Copying the enemy’s example, he drove a line of palisades in the water opposite the camp, behind which his own ships should ride. It was a poor substitute for a harbour. And if in the skirmishing in the bay one of his vessels were driven ashore, it must be counted as a loss unless it could be at once towed off again.

But most serious of all for the Athenians was the character of the naval fighting. News of the indecisive naval battle at mouth of the Corinthian Gulf, the tale of which has been told earlier, now reached Sicily.{600} The Syracusans were quick to seize the idea (then invented by the Corinthians) of strengthened prows. By baulks of projecting timber and stout ties within the hull they now fitted their own warships with beaks far heavier than those of the enemy. In the crowded waters of the harbour speed was no consideration. They prepared to charge prow against prow. The Athenians could not baffle them. If hard pressed, the Syracusans could back through the harbour mouth into the open sea. If the Athenians were driven back these had only a hostile shore near at hand upon which to retire. Cooped up together as they would be in a confused hustle, what would their boasted naval skill avail them then? Hitherto only a clumsy pilot ran his ship “beak to beak” against an enemy. Now the Syracusan pilot must make this his chief object. For this way lay victory.

Some time passed while the Syracusans were making ready. There was much skirmishing in the harbour. The Athenians managed to destroy most of the enemy’s palisades. The Syracusans replaced them. All this was futile. Meanwhile new reinforcements gathered to march into the city. Nicias sent word to his Sicel allies to muster and intercept their march. The cunning natives trapped the unwary column and cut it up very badly. A mere 1500 escaped from the ambush and made their way into Syracuse. Even so, the Syracusans’ army was to this extent increased and the Syracusans’ hopes mounted ever higher. When all was ready, they fell once

more upon the investing forces both by land and sea. Their army attacked both sides of the southern investing wall (which still remained in Athenian occupation), assaulting it both from the city and from the Olympieion. Their fleet once again bore down upon the Athenian ships to renew the struggle in the waters of the Great Harbour.

Now fortune reversed her earlier treatment. The Syracusans' army failed to carry the wall. But now at last "the day" was slowly dawning for their fleet.

Eighty Syracusan ships entered the harbour and rowed against the Athenians. Nicias manned 75 and sent them out against the enemy. All day long the two fleets skirmished together, and drew off at evening, when the Syracusan army also retired within the city walls. The Athenians lost a ship or two. Next day all was quiet. Nicias used it to repair his ships, and posted a line of his merchantmen outside the entrances to his dock of palisades. The morning of the third day was spent in more aimless skirmishing. Then the Syracusans backed water and rowed again to shore. The Athenians, congratulating themselves that the enemy had had enough of it, themselves withdrew to their lines and disembarked to take their customary meal upon the strand. To their consternation they saw the whole of the Syracusan fleet bearing down upon them once again. The ingenious enemy had dined on shore at the ships' sides instead of going home to the city as usual. The Athenians, though dinnerless, hurried on board and got their fleet out into open water in time. The Syracusan advancing line halted. "The fleets looked at one another."

The Athenians, tired and hungry, became impatient. They charged, cheering. This was what the Syracusans desired. The light beaks of the Athenian vessels stove themselves in when they clashed against the fortified prows of the enemy. A storm of missiles broke over the Athenians. A swarm of enemy light craft darted upon them, crashing upon their oars, running alongside, shooting vigorously at the Athenian sailors.

The Syracusans won the day. The Athenians retreated for shelter behind their palisades. Seven of their ships were sunk. Many were damaged. The enemy lost two, which ventured rashly too near the defences in their joyous pursuit. For the first time in the war the Athenians were squarely beaten at sea.

Then, in the midst of the Syracusans' preparations to renew the conflict and bring it finally to a close, Demosthenes and Eurymedon, with 73 ships, 5000 hoplites, and many light-armed troops, sailed into the Great Harbour, and the Syracusans' hopes sank to zero. Here was a

second Athenian armament splendidly equipped and all but as strong as the first. The ships of Syracuse skulked cowering for refuge in their harbour. The Athenians sailed hither and thither as they pleased. Was Athens' strength then inexhaustible?

It was the darkest hour before the dawn for Syracuse.

But only on land could the issue of the siege be finally decided. The new general Demosthenes rightly resolved to strike while the iron was hot. On a moonlit night he led his mass of troops to scale the heights of Epipolae. Here, and in the Syracusan cross wall on top, was the key to the situation. The Syracusans had run their wall right out westwards as far as the Euryelus summit, where they had built and garrisoned a fort. To the north of this fortified line, on the northern crest of the plateau, they had built three more forts looking down over the northern sea and Thapsus. These contained troops to succour any part of their wall which might be attacked by the enemy from their lines to the south. Demosthenes saw that his only hope was to roll up the enemy's line from west to east. Then when he had cleared the plateau he could build once more his own wall from the Round Fort to Trogilus.

The Syracusans in Euryelus fort had no warning of the foe's assault. In the early night, as the moon rose, a dark mass of men came up over the northern ridge and swept down upon the garrison. The fort was taken. Those who escaped the slaughter fled, giving the alarm, until it reached Gylippus in the city. He hastened to the rescue. Long before his coming the picked Syracusan *corps d'élite* of 600 men who were the advance guard on the heights had hurled themselves upon the enemy, and had been driven back by sheer weight of numbers. The Athenians came sweeping down the line of wall like a great tidal wave rushing out of the dark upon a groyne hurling every obstacle shorewards. But the assault spent its force. Some of Demosthenes' men fell to pulling down the cross wall. Others surged onwards in disjointed bodies. Order and cohesion were lost. Furious battle cries and shouts of victory confused and baffled all. Many a Dorian was fighting on the Athenian side that night, and his shouts were taken as an enemy's. Friend slew friend. Only the watchwords could distinguish friend from foe under the baffling moonlight, and the Syracusans, quickly learning the enemy's word, less prodigal of their own, used it to escape when some great body of the foe rose up in their path, while these in turn, ignorant who was foe or who was friend, perished smiting wildly. The bright light of the summer moon shone down on the struggling black multitude of men where two great armies strove confusedly in the death grapple. First then the Boeotians[{601}] turned fiercely on the advancing foe and drove them back. There was desperate fighting—wolves

tearing and rending. Then the struggling mass was seen to recede, drawing nearer to the crest of the slope. Body after body went falling down the rocks. Men hurled their shields away and leapt wildly down the crags.[{602}] The enemy were fleeing. The ridge was cleared. Morning broke upon a hill top strewn with bodies of the slain, upon a routed desperate army cowering behind its entrenchments once more upon the southern levels, upon the Syracusan cavalry rounding up the fugitives, so lately come, so ignorant of the ground, seeking shelter where there could be none, cut down remorselessly by the pursuing horse. Demosthenes' great attack had failed. All now was lost on land. Syracuse was impregnable.

Plenty of ships remained. The whole Athenian expeditionary force down to the smallest cabin-boy might have sailed back quietly to Athens. Demosthenes pressed this decision upon his colleague Nicias. But Nicias, stubborn and selfish, refused to agree. Deceived or self-deceiving, he professed to believe that treachery in Syracuse might still deliver up the triumphant city into the hands of her routed enemy.

Then Demosthenes and Eurymedon made a second suggestion. Let them, at least, leave the Great Harbour and shift their station to Thapsus or to Catana again. They could still carry on the war from either place, and at least they would have the open sea for the operations of the fleet, and, with it, room for skill and for manœuvring. "Let us begone from here", they urged imploringly. "There is no room in these narrow waters."

Still Nicias refused consent. Neither Demosthenes nor Eurymedon dared to override him. His puzzled colleagues had to believe that he must have *some* good reason which he was hiding from them. In reality he had none. Home he dared not return, to face the wrath of his fellow-citizens. This is the one motive which Thucydides himself expressly ascribes to him. Imagination gropes in vain after any sound reason which he could have had for his refusal to quit the ill-omened waters of the Great Harbour.

So, week after week, the Athenians lingered on, clinging to their stations under Plemmyrion hill. Sickness ravaged their lines. The obstinate selfishness of an ailing stubborn fool kept upon that hostile shore what still was a great fleet and a great army, which, had they returned, would yet have saved their city against her bitterest foes.

Meanwhile the indefatigable Gylippus had gone off inland again to collect yet more troops whom the victory on Epipolae would rally to his side. Presently he returned, bringing with him a great new army, and not of Sicilians only. Six hundred Peloponnesian troops had reached

Selinus after an Odyssey of wandering by Libyan shores, and these now joined their Spartan general. From the heights Gylippus looked down upon the enemy's camp of sullen, inactive, despairing men. Far other thoughts, of contemptuous surprise and confident anticipation, must have filled the Spartan's breast.

At last, grudgingly, belatedly, a month late, even Nicias yielded to the logic of facts. He consented to withdraw the expedition. Secret orders were issued for departure. All was made ready on shipboard. All food supplies from Catana were countermanded. Then superstition intervened to turn what had been defeat into disaster beyond remedy. Incompetence by itself could not accomplish what any writer other than Thucydides must have called the Vengeance of the Gods.

On the night before they were to sail there befell an eclipse of the moon. It is the most famous eclipse in world history. The rank and file of the Athenians were terror-stricken. They swarmed round their generals, calling on them not to stir. The soothsayers and camp-prophets interpreted the omen. They must wait until the moon was full again. Nicias, writes his compatriot gravely, was a man "somewhat overmuch inclined to divination and the like". "There was nothing to discuss," Nicias said. "They must stay the twenty-seven days." Twenty-seven more years of life would not have taught him the elementary duty of a general. Piety must have its way. He dies with the favour of the gods, and Thucydides wondering and wonderfully laments his death:

> "No one of the Hellenes of my time was less deserving of so miserable an end; for he lived in the practice of every virtue."

Go then to Heaven, Nicias, for piety and virtue. But what of your men whom your piety, your virtue, sent down quick to Hell, to the massacre of the Assinarus, to the loathsomeness of death in the quarries of Syracuse?

The Syracusans joyfully used the time so given them. Presently their fleet sailed out again, 76 strong. The Athenians, 86 in number, put out against them, Eurymedon in command. He extended his line too far, hoping to enclose the enemy. His weakened centre was routed. He himself on the wing was cut off, and perished with his ships. Others were driven on shore. The defeated fleet returned to the shelter of its lines. Eighteen ships in all were lost.

A fire-ship bore down blazing upon the fleet. This attempt failed.

The Syracusans began to close the mouth of the Great Harbour. A long line of triremes, merchantmen, and light craft were set fastened together, broadside on, across the mile of water.

The Athenians sent out every ship they had. Every suitable man was set on board, archers, javelin-men, hoplites. The ships were weighed down with the mass of troops. For it was now in very truth a “land-battle on ship-board” once again. Each ship carried grapnels. When the strong prows of the enemy crash into them, so the orders ran, let the marines be quick, and make fast the grapnels before they back away. The troops on board will do the rest. There can be no retreating now upon a hostile shore. It is the end. There are no more ships like these in Peiraeus dockyards.

From ship to ship went Nicias, exhorting, encouraging his men with gallant words. Omens and prophets were at last forgotten. There was now but one, the last, the oldest, and the best of omens, “to fight for the fatherland”. For Athens’ own safety was staked upon the fortunes of that day’s battle in Syracuse Great Harbour.

Nicias implored the men, “feeling, as men do on the eve of a great struggle, that all which he had done was nothing, and that he had not said half enough.” So young British officers in Flanders’ trenches felt, as zero hour approached. So one of these wrote to me, quoting Thucydides’ very words:

> “He spoke to them of their wives and children and their fathers’ Gods, as men will at such a time; for then men do not care whether their commonplace phrases seem old-fashioned or not, but make the old appeals again and again, believing they may be of use when the terror is at hand.”

Then Nicias took command of the army stretched along the shore. Demosthenes and two colleagues took the last fleet out. One hundred and ten ships rushed at the boom across the harbour mouth, where some enemy warships lay on guard. The rest of the hostile fleet lay round the harbour, watching.

The guardships were overpowered. The Athenians began to hack desperately at the fastenings of the boom. Then from all sides there came crashing in among them the enemy’s ships. “Never did so many fight in so small a space.” All but two hundred vessels fought together that day:

> “God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?”

Only Thucydides can tell the rest of the tale of that grim fight. Only Thucydides can interpret

the feelings of the men on shore as they stood there, helplessly gazing, swaying to and fro in their agony.{603}

So the sun sank in the heavens and the struggle ceased. The victors bore off their wrecks and their dead back to the city. The dark surface of the waves was strewn with the Athenian wreckage. The living were in misery too great to cast a thought towards their dead. Athens' sun had set.

As evening fell, Demosthenes came to Nicias. They had still 60 ships left, and the foe had not so many even after all. Fewer than 50 remained to the enemy, he urged. Let them make one more effort to force their way out at daybreak.

Nicias assented. Retreat by land was hopeless.

The sailors refused. They would not face that passage once again.{604} A night and a day passed by. They burnt a few of their ships half-heartedly. They looked on passively as the Syracusans towed the rest of the empty hulls away. No single Athenian ship now rode upon the waters of that harbour into which Athens' fleet, Queen of the Western Seas, had sailed so proudly:

> "And a cry was heard, unfathered of earthly lips,
> What of the ships, O Carthage? Carthage, what of the ships?"

### *§ 6. The retreat and the massacre*{605}

On the very evening of the sea fight the Athenians mustered with their allies, soldiers, sailors, non-combatants, for a retreat by land. Could they but reach the friendly Sicel hills to the west, the column might yet reach Catana and safety. Their way lay up the Anapus valley by the track to Hybla, so turning the hostile Epipolae ridge to the north.

And the way was open. None had gathered yet to block the steep mountain track by Floridia. In vain Hermocrates had urged the immediate blocking of the ways that evening, lest the Athenians should escape that night. The victorious troops were in the city, drinking, keeping holiday. "How could they be expected to take up arms and march out at orders of their generals?"

> "We have won the victory, my lord king, and we mean to enjoy it."

This was Greek discipline.

But Hermocrates would find a way in spite of his men's insubordination to compass the destruction of the Athenians.

"They should not escape", the Syracusan swore to himself, "to cause endless further trouble and war in Sicily. Not one man should go."

One night and one night only, and all save the wounded and the sick might be beyond the reach of harm. Trickery must achieve what military insubordination threatened to prevent. Dusk was falling when the Athenian sentries saw a little group of horsemen riding up towards them. These checked their steeds within earshot.

"Friends", they called out through the gloom, "we are your general's friends. Always he has learnt from us what befalls in Syracuse. Warn him from us not to stir this night. All ways are already blocked. Let him make all ready and withdraw in order under arms when daylight comes."

They wheeled their horses and disappeared in the dark, riding towards the city. The sentries bore the message to their generals. Nicias and Demosthenes believed it and kept their men in camp. So also on the day following, when still there had been a bare chance of escape, they stayed, making their final preparations. On the third morning, when at last they moved, Gylippus and his Syracusans lay crouched in waiting amid the hills.

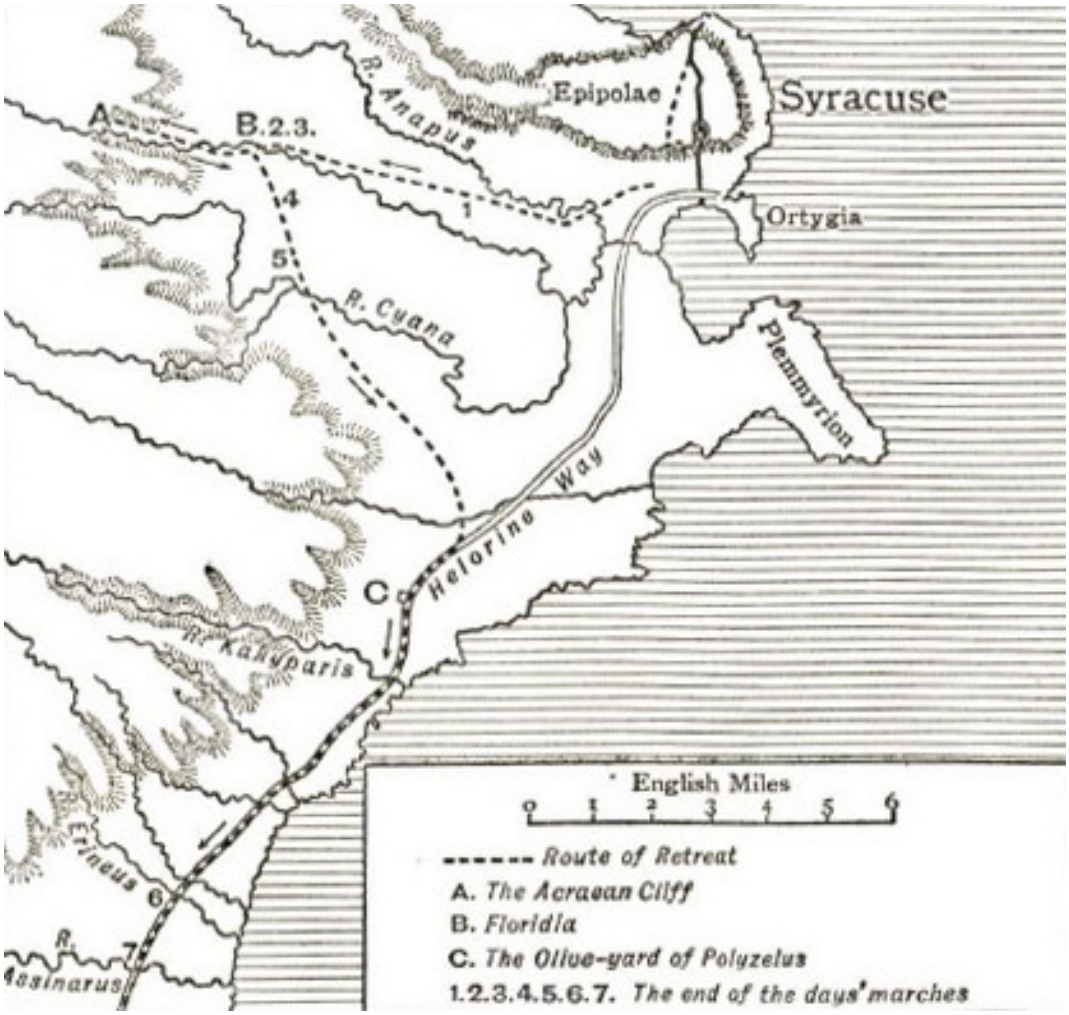
Only the pen of a Thucydides can depict, as it has depicted, the agony of that retreat of what seemed

"not an army, but the fugitive population of a city captured after siege, ay, and of a great city too."

Only a Thucydides can write the last most gallant and moving of all speeches, that of Nicias to his despairing men. By it Nicias redeems his fame.

"Might not God even at the last desperate extremity have mercy and bring them home again? By valour, but by valour only, might they still press through to build again their city's fallen greatness."

The army turned their backs upon the sea and struck up the Anapus valley inland. Nicias led the van, Demosthenes the rear.




On the first day the army forced the passage of the Anapus at a ford and encamped on rising ground to the south of the river. They had marched a bare five miles. On the second day they encamped at a spot but half this distance beyond in a level bit of land on the banks of a tributary of the Cyana river. Beyond them lay the pass of the Acraean ridge which was strongly held by the enemy. On the third and fourth mornings they struggled in vain to force the pass, but were again and again hurled back. On the fifth day they made less than a mile’s advance, and towards evening the generals abandoned all hope of the mountain route. There was no chance of getting through to Catana. Their last remaining possibility seemed to be to retire southwards, strike the Helorine Way as soon as possible, and endeavour to reach Camarina on the southern coast of Sicily. When it was dark, they lit many fires to delude the watching enemy and quietly slipped away through the low-lands under the mountain edge, making for the sea. The van under Nicias pushed forward stoutly and at daybreak on the sixth day it reached the Helorine Way, six miles in advance of the lagging rear under Demosthenes.

So Nicias’ column presently arrived at the river Kakyparis, dispersed an enemy force

which disputed the passage, and, abandoning an earlier plan of following the course of this river up into the hills, pushed on along the highway southwards to the River Erineus. Crossing this river, the van encamped on the further side of it for this, the sixth night of the retreat.

Meanwhile Demosthenes and the entire rear-guard had surrendered. They were pursued hotly by Gylippus and his main army on the morning of that same day as soon as the trick of the bivouac fires had been discovered. Overtaken and brought to a stand, they fought desperately for many hours, crushed up together in an enclosed encumbered space, known as the olive yard of Polyzelus. But the enemy kept them continually under long range fire of missiles, and towards evening, being in desperate and hopeless plight, those who survived, 6000 men in all, with Demosthenes himself, surrendered on an offer of bare life. They were disarmed and marched back at once to Syracuse. The captors filled four shields full with the money which their prisoners handed over.

To Nicias on the Erineus the news of the rear-guard's fate was brought by the enemy on the morning of the seventh day. When he was convinced of its truth, he suggested terms to Gylippus. The Spartan rejected them. All that day Nicias defended his position, hemmed in and assailed on all sides, hoping to escape at dead of night. Evening came to stop the actual fighting. Of food the army had little or none. At midnight the word to march was given. As the weary troops picked up their arms, a wild shout of triumph resounded through the night from the ring of wrathful foes. Gylippus was not to be tricked again. The men, despairing, laid down their arms and waited for daybreak, all save 300 only, who broke through the encompassing foe and so for the time escaped.

The eighth and last morning dawned. Nicias led his men forwards, fighting every foot of the way. So they reached the deep channel of the Assinarus, a stream with steep and muddy banks. Maddened with wounds and thirst, the fugitives crowded into the river without order, trampling one another under foot, swept away by the current, stooping greedily to drink, and all the while the pitiless missiles rained upon them from the Syracusans on the further bank.

"But the foul water, thick with mud, dyed red with the blood of the slain, was drunk all the same, and the crowd fought for it."

If any struggled up the opposite bank and fled, the cavalry were upon them and cut them down.

To stay the massacre, Nicias at last surrendered to Gylippus. For himself he asked no terms,

let the Spartan only stop the slaughter of his men. The general gave the order, and the "massacre of the Assinarus" was stayed. The remnants of the army were led back to Syracuse, and the 300 who had escaped in the night were pursued and also taken. There were scattered fugitives and some cavalry who found their way to the hills, and so to Catana, as did others who escaped later from their fate of slavery. But never was the annihilation of an army as an army more complete. Forty thousand men had begun that retreat. With hardly an exception they all were slain or captured. Nicias and Demosthenes themselves were at once put to the sword. Gylippus strove manfully to save their lives. But, the victory won, the Syracusans had their way, and both paid the last penalty for defeat. According to Philistus, a later writer, the generals were stoned to death, or in yet another account, that of Timaeus the Sicilian, Hermocrates sent them word of the trend of the discussion in the Syracusan Assembly upon their doom, whereupon they, like brave gentlemen, slew themselves.{606} Thucydides has lamented over Nicias' fate. Indeed he made a brave ending. Yet, for his colleague, the great general who had served Athens so long and so gloriously in many scenes of war, who, in this his last campaign, made no mistake from first to last but was dragged down by the older man's incompetence, for Demosthenes, greatest of Athens' soldier generals in the war, Thucydides can spare no single word of regret or praise. It is hard to forgive the greatest of historians this silence.

One other name he leaves without the mention which no other writer could deny him. Callistratus, commander of the Athenian cavalry on the retreat, cut his way through the enemy at head of his squadron, and rode southwards. Pursuit had died away. He showed his men the path to safety, wheeled his own horse round, and rode, a solitary figure, back to the north. The quiet Assinarus crossed, he reached the last camp on the Erineus. Here there were plunderers still busy, stripping the bodies of the dead. Callistratus rode desperately upon them, and cut five of the scoundrels down before he too fell slain, he and his steed together.{607} So long as war remains man's part, there stands in honour the name of Callistratus, a man.

Not a few of the captives became slaves of their individual captors. Those who were not so fortunate, at least 7000 in number, were cast into the stone quarries at Syracuse and there for many weeks endured such torments as civilised man, it might else be thought, could scarcely inflict upon brute beasts. They were crowded together in a deep and narrow place. The sun scorched them by day, for shelters they had none, and the autumn nights were cold. Pestilence ravaged them. The corpses of those who died, whether of wounds, of plague, of exposure, lay

heaped together and rotted where they lay. The stench was unendurable. Hunger and thirst preyed ceaselessly upon them. Half a pint of water and a pint of meal was allowed each one daily. “Every kind of misery which could befall man in such a place befell them.” All endured the like for some ten weeks. Then some were taken out and sold. The Athenians and any western Greeks of Sicily or Italy who had fought for these lay in the quarries for eight entire months. Then they too, as many as survived, were sold. Athens had meted out quick death to many a captive, and death without such excuse as may explain the Syracusans’ vengeance. But never had she inflicted such lingering and barbarous torment on any whom she had vanquished in her wars.

Euripides it was who saved some few from the doom of the quarries. Robert Browning’s Balaustion, the fair maid of Rhodes, may tell Plutarch’s famous story,[{608}] how

“Of all these men immersed in misery
It was found none had been advantaged so
By aught in the past life he used to prize
And pride himself concerning—no rich man
By riches, no wise man by wisdom, no
Wiser man still (as who loved more the Muse)
By storing, at brain’s edge and tip of tongue,
Old glory, great plays that had long ago
Made themselves wings to fly about the world—
Not one such man was helped so at his need
As certain few that (wisest they of all)
Had, at first summons, oped heart, flung door wide
At the new knocking of Euripides.”

* * * * *

“Such were in safety: any who could speak
A chorus to the end, or prologise,
Roll out a rhesis, wield some golden length
Stiffened by wisdom out into a line,
Or thrust and parry in bright monostich,
Teaching Euripides to Syracuse—
Any such happy man had prompt reward:
If he lay bleeding on the battlefield
They staunched his wounds and gave him drink and food;
If he were slave i’ the house, for reverence
They rose up, bowed to who proved master now,
And bade him go free, thank Euripides!
Ay, and such did so: many such, he said,
Returning home to Athens, sought him out,
The old bard in the solitary house,

And thanked him ere they went to sacrifice."

"Of all the Hellenic actions which took place in this war"—so Thucydides ends his story of the Sicilian expedition—

"or indeed of all Hellenic actions which are on record, this was the greatest—the most glorious to the victors, the most ruinous to the vanquished; for these were utterly and at all points defeated: their suffering was intense, their destruction, as men say, an absolute destruction. Fleet and army perished from the face of the earth; nothing was saved, and of the many who went forth few returned home.

"Thus ended the Sicilian expedition."


TROAS
Hecatonnesi
Methymna
LESBOS
Mitylene
Eresos
Malea Prom.
Arginusae Is.
Cyme
Phocaea
Mimas
Sardis
CHIOS
(Smyrna)
Chios City
Erythrae
Colophon
Notium
Ephesus
SAMOS
ICAROS
Mycale
Lade
Miletus
COS
Cnidus
Syme
RHODES
English Miles
0
20
40
60
80

## CHAPTER X—THE END OF THUCYDIDES' NARRATIVE

### *§ 1. "The Ionian War" and the evidence for it*

THE news of the Athenian catastrophe at Syracuse came "like a thunderclap" to Greece. "The nimbus of invincibility", says the one picturesque German writer, "which had clung round the Athenian fleet since the day of Salamis was rent into pieces."{609} Her gleeful enemies, her excited subjects, expected the final doom of Athens within the limits of one more short campaign.{610} In actual fact the great war lasted for nine more years. In this its third period Athens won three notable victories at sea, and in it she had the opportunity twice of concluding an honourable, possibly an advantageous, peace before her downfall came.

This third period was nicknamed in old days both "The Decelean War" and "The Ionian War"{611} A conscientious German historian labels it laboriously and comprehensively "The Decelean-Ionian-Hellespontine War"{612} The more popular title of "The Decelean War" is indeed inadequate and, strategically, most misleading. It is true that King Agis, now permanently ensconced with a Spartan garrison at the fortress of Decelea in North Attica, wrought the Athenians much harm.{613} The countryside was wasted far and wide. Agriculture was impossible. The olive trees were ruthlessly destroyed. No cattle could be pastured in the fields. The work of the silver-mines at Laureion was sorely hampered, if not completely interrupted. The corn, which had been brought from Euboea over the narrow Euripus channel and so by land to the city, must now be transported by sea round the stormy Sunium promontory. More than 20,000 slaves of every description ran away to Agis and to freedom. Year by year, month by month, day by day, the citizens had to guard their walls, manning the battlements by day in relays, sleeping under arms by night, "until", says Thucydides, "they were quite worn out". Winter brought them rough weather but not the least relief. Athens became a camp, with all a camp's alarms. "We go a-marketing for greens with weapons in our hands like Corybants," wails Aristophanes' indignant heroine, Lysistrata. Decelea was a running sore and there was no remedy to heal it so long as the war lasted. But though the evil was incurable it was not fatal. Agis had no power to impose terms of peace or of surrender upon the defiant city. Now, as always, the war could be "decided" only upon the sea. And as weary month followed weary month for eight long years in interminable succession, the king and his Spartans on their lonely outpost duty among the hostile hills must have sighed longingly many a time for the homely comforts of their own Sparta, to which they had so long been strangers, yet never thereby had they brought the war appreciably nearer to its ending.

So long as Athens still had a fleet in being she need not lose all hope. Through all the concluding years of the war circumstance set the stage for its events overseas, on the coast of Ionia and on the shores of the Hellespont, the Bosporus, and their connecting sea. Three causes brought the fleets of the combatants to these waters: Athens' need for her safe food supply from the Black Sea, the revolts of subject after subject in these districts, and, chief of all, Persian intervention in the struggle. Hence it was off the coast line of Asia Minor that the war was fought out to its finish, and, in its course from 412 B.C. to 405 B.C., fitly earns its title of "The Ionian War." While her fleet could still contend for the mastery of the sea Athens at home on land was inviolable, unless the foulest treachery reared its head within her gates.

After the epic story of the Syracusan Expedition the tale of the remaining nine years of the war must seem to the reader of it an anti-climax. One special reason contributes to this feeling of satiety and wearifulness. Not that there is any falling away in adventure or in heroism. The desperate courage of a sorely-stricken people, threatened by revolt abroad and by traitors at home, can but rarely have been surpassed. Nor do men fail Athens in her bitter need. Alcibiades and Theramenes have earned their niches in the Athenian Temple of Fame well-nigh as surely as Pericles himself. It is the grave inferiority of the actual historical record of these years which robs their story of its colour.

Thucydides indeed has told the story of the first two years of "The Ionian War". His tale breaks off abruptly and unfinished before the year 411 B.C. has reached its close. The historian's death, whether by disease or by violence, in 396 B.C. stayed his hand. Thereupon three or four writers set themselves to the work of finishing his story of the war. Not one was equal to the task. Not one was able to tread in the master's steps. One of these writers, Thucydides' younger contemporary, was the Athenian Xenophon. His work, the *Hellenica*, survives. Its beginning fits on, clumsily enough, to the ending of Thucydides' narrative. His style is dreary, his monotony deplorable, his wordiness intolerable. Another such writer was a certain Ephorus of Cyme in the fourth century B.C., a man of narrow views and fixed ideas, without art or insight or any sense of proportion. His work remains to us incorporated in undigested masses into the Universal History of a Sicilian writer Diodorus, himself of a date some centuries later, and it has been mangled rudely by the incorporation. The other "continuators" of Thucydides, Theopompus, Cratippus, and the rest, have almost completely perished. Truly their loss is a cheap one. Never did the art of "historiography" suffer a more rapid decline and fall than then, at once, when the pen dropped from Thucydides' hand, and

ranting declamation seized the place which unrivalled genius had suddenly left empty.

Yet it had been well for Thucydides' own name, if not so well for knowledge, when once fate denied him leave to finish the task to which he had set himself, if his own last book, the eighth, had itself never reached us. Quite obviously he himself would never have given to posterity the story of the two years in its present shape. Virgil on his death-bed bids his *Aeneid* be destroyed, and a great Emperor saves the immortal poem. The faithful enthusiasm which treasured the broken remnants of Thucydides' masterpiece had perhaps done better to end his story two years earlier. In Book VIII. there are preserved the materials collected by him for his further history. In it we are admitted to his workshop. But death has intervened before the work of finished artistry could be wrought out of the rough wood and stone. There were great speeches still to be composed and voiced by actors in the pageant. There were innumerable petty details of warfare ruthlessly to be sacrificed to the artist's sense of proportion when the work received its final shaping. Many men have puzzled over the "problem of Book VIII." Some sought to exculpate its admitted inferiority by ascribing it to lesser men. Over one such excuse the old biographer Marcellinus labours so earnestly that the sprite of humour demands its mention. "Some say", he writes, "that the eighth history is his daughter's work. Clearly this is not the case. For it was not within woman's nature to imitate such excellence and art. Further, had there been some such woman, she would have been eager to be known, neither would she have written the eighth history alone, but she would have left us many other works, revealing her special genius." It is Thucydides' own work, the biographer for his part concludes, but written feebly because his body then was languishing of the illness whereof he died.[{614}]

Unfinished rough draft though the eighth book is, it alone gives us the true story of the actual events of these two years 412-411 B.C. as they befell at home and abroad. Later discoveries cannot shake its still unsurpassed authority.[{615}] The military history of the war must carry us far beyond its broken ending. Yet hardly would any but academic pedantry impose Book VIII. for "special study" upon those who revel in the great historian's masterpiece, the two preceding books.

### *§ 2. The muster of the fleets, 412 B.C.*

The tidings of the annihilation of the Athenian forces in Sicily did not reach Greece until the beginning of the winter of 413 B.C., when operations both by land and by sea were already

suspended for the year. It was this which saved Athens from instant doom. She was given the precious winter months in which to make such preparations as her crippled resources allowed. She could hope for no mercy from the elated enemy. No terms were offered her and she expected none. As soon as the first agony of despair was past, she set herself grimly to make ready for her death-grapple with the foe in the coming spring.

Her position did indeed seem little short of desperate. The greater number of her ships, the most expert of her mariners and pilots, were destroyed. Henceforward, build ships as fast as she can with timber specially imported from Macedonia, her fleet is roughly but equal in numbers and certainly no longer superior in mobility to that of the enemy, now reinforced by ships from Sicily and Italy. Of money there is left in an empty treasury only the reserve fund of a thousand talents set aside at the beginning of the war by Pericles' forethought for use only in the gravest of emergencies. The revenues of Athens rapidly diminish. Before the disaster at Syracuse her statesmen had just substituted a new financial system for the hated tribute, hoping to get more money by a five per cent tax imposed on all imports and exports in every harbour of the Empire. Only in rare isolated instances was the tribute still imposed after 413 B.C.[{616}] But as the Empire's loyalty was shaken and revolt presently followed revolt, and as the seas became ever more and more insecure for merchantmen, so the volume of Athenian commerce contracted and the new tax fell short of the expectations of the financiers. Fewer ships came into Peiraeus harbour. Fewer strangers paid customs dues or law court fees. Less silver came from Laureion mines. All became impoverished, the erstwhile rich as well as the struggling poor. Money to pay the crews or to furbish the ships was hard to find. A Board of Control, the ten "Poristae", promoted now as an emergency measure from a lowlier function to a comprehensive financial control,[{617}] could recommend economies, but these greybeards could not stabilise decreasing revenues. Only if Athens could obtain financial aid from Persia could she be saved, said one of her citizens, Peisander.[{618}] There seemed not the least chance of so beguiling the great king, the city's immemorial enemy. It was not long before Persian gold was promised to the enemy, and Sparta fought Athens by this means upon the sea, as Napoleon's Continental foes were nourished by the gold from Pitt.

There was discontent and secret plotting at home. The Periclean democracy had brought this disaster upon the State. It was in vain that the people, apt to blame anyone rather than itself, turned angrily upon its more insignificant demagogues and rent them. Popular government was sorely discredited. And at least the principle of pay for public duty, so dear to the people's

heart, might seem now, in the depleted state of the Exchequer, an unjustifiable luxury. The democracy found itself threatened from more sides than one. A committee of Public Safety, ten elderly “Probouloi”, set up in the winter of 413-412 B.C., was but a stop-gap and did little to restore confidence in the administration, even though it included men like Sophocles (if this were the poet) and Hagnon.{619} All through 412 B.C. the agitation simmered. The “Moderate” party claimed honestly that the time was come for a limitation of the franchise to men who could, in this emergency, themselves fight for the State with weapons of their own providing, roughly some 5000 in number. Nor should any office, they maintained, be paid. The leader of the party was one Theramenes, son of Hagnon, an able and a patriotic man. But there were others who plotted an entire subversion of the Constitution. Now at last, after an interval of more than 40 years, Oligarchs and Oligarchic propaganda re-appeared at Athens. Professing lip-service to the broader, saner policy of the Moderates, the Oligarchs had but one idea in their heads, to seize all power and govern the State themselves. They had a skilled leader in Antiphon, greatest of living orators, and in Phrynichus, once a shepherd lad, who had left his sheep and drifted into the city to make his livelihood and reputation as accuser in the Courts. {620} But he now had the wit to turn his cloak when the wind began to blow from a different quarter. The Oligarchic Clubs became active. There was much talk of secret meetings, of assassinations. Men became scared. In the extreme crisis of her fate Athens became rent by political faction.

This, the greatest of all perils, took time to develop. For the moment, in the first winter after the disaster, the lack of ships and of money and the growing likelihood of revolt within the Empire were the citizens’ most pressing concern. And while they for their part turned stoutly and stubbornly to make provision for the coming campaign, their Spartan foes were themselves involved in the embarrassment of riches and the perplexity of divided counsels. Euboea and Lesbos, both anxious to revolt from Athens, sent in this same winter to Agis at Decelea asking him to aid them. But Chios and the Persian satraps, Tissaphernes at Sardis and Pharnabazus on the Hellespont, all preferred to deal direct with the Government at Sparta, and Endius, the most influential of the Spartan ephors, was no good friend of his king. The Athenian exile Alcibiades was ever at Endius’ ear, urging him to send help to Chios to revolt. It has at times been urged on Alcibiades’ behalf that in this advice he was doing Athens the best service in his power, since had Spartan help been concentrated rather on Lesbos than on Chios, on Pharnabazus rather than on Tissaphernes, the Hellespont would have been closed to Athenian ships and Athens, more or less quickly, would have starved. The view is unsound. The most

important element in the whole strategical situation at the moment was the Chian navy. Chios, that “greatest of cities”, as Thucydides expressly calls her, had a navy of some 60 ships. Had she not been encouraged to revolt, Athens would have enjoyed the disposal of the Chian navy and thereby have remained in indisputable control of the Grecian seas. The diminished Spartan fleet could certainly then have neither closed the Hellespont nor seriously endangered any other source of Athens’ food supply. Never yet had Chios faltered in her loyalty and obedience to Athens. She was rightly beloved by the great city and associated with her in prayers and sacrifices to the Gods. As the Athenian poet Eupolis sang:

“She sends us men in time of need, and many a gallant ship,

Obedient as a well-trained steed that never wants the whip.”

Was even Chios now to fall away? Who would then any longer hesitate also to revolt from Athens. Alcibiades’ advice to Endius to promote the revolt of Chios and to co-operate with Tissaphernes at Sardis was the gravest of his disservices to his city. It was also almost the last of the blows which he dealt to her.{621}

Presently, however, Agis and Endius found it desirable to agree on a joint plan of operations. In the spring of 412 B.C. the first squadron was to sail for Chios, thence to Lesbos, and at last to the Hellespont. So, 39 ships strong, it gaily put to sea. To its bewildered surprise it found itself incontinently chased hotly back by an Athenian fleet of 37 sail to take shelter in the lonely Corinthian harbour of Speiraeum (or Peiraeum) on the Saronic Gulf and there to suffer an ignominious blockade.{622} Athens then had a fleet left after all! The short “campaign of victory” had opened inauspiciously.

It was not long before the tide of fortune turned. Alcibiades with a little squadron of five Spartan ships had slipped away unobserved from the Peloponnese and made his way direct to Chios. On his arrival the great island revolted. At once the infection spread. In quick succession Erythrae, Clazomenae, Teos, Miletus, Lebedos, the Lesbian towns of Mitylene, Methymna, and Eresus, and presently Cnidus and Rhodes in the south, joined the Spartan side. And Tissaphernes concluded a treaty of alliance with Sparta immediately after the revolt of Miletus. So Sparta bartered away her soul for Persian gold.

“All the territory and all the cities which are in possession of the king”, so ran the treaty, “or all that were once in possession of the king’s ancestors shall be the king’s.”{623} Sparta, “liberator of the Hellenes”, thus gave innumerable Greeks back into Persian slavery. Presently

two more treaties were in this same year concluded between the Spartan generals and the Persian satrap.{624} These promised Sparta herself more, and imposed on her fewer obligations, than did the first treaty. But all three treaties abandoned the whole of the Greek cities in Asia to the great king. There were noble Spartans who protested at the time, like Lichas the envoy, who had sorrowfully to bow to sheer necessity, or Callicratidas some years later.{625} Their protests were unavailing. Sparta must have Persian gold to pay her crews. Yet these protests kindled in the satrap's mind a doubt concerning Spartan sincerity and so served Alcibiades well when later he advised Tissaphernes to observe neutrality between the combatants. Surely this subservience to Persia irked Sparta. It is with a sense of triumphant relief that almost as soon as the great war is over the Spartan King Agesilaus resumed Sparta's historic role and set forth once more to "liberate Ionia". He failed. "Sparta was to discover it is not always so easy to lay the ghosts whom you have evoked",{626} and the Persian monarch became the final arbiter of Grecian destinies for many a weary year.

Chios had revolted and the Athenian Empire on the Asiatic seaboard was falling to pieces. The reserve fund of 1000 talents was at once put in use. Was there any other remedy besides? Some vague ideas of Imperial Federation floated dimly in men's minds at Athens and were voiced by the poet Aristophanes next year. "Can we not gather up all our cities into one", cries Lysistrata—"make all these separated worsted threads into one great woollen ball and weave a blanket for the people thence?"{627} It was indeed far too late for such half-hearted methods of conciliation. Others, with equal futility, urged that a change of constitution from democracy to oligarchy in a subject city would bind this by ties of gratitude to Athens. They tried the experiment with Thasos and were sadly disappointed. "The result in Thasos' case", remarks Thucydides drily enough, "and also, I believe, in many others was just the opposite of what the oligarchic plotters had intended. For the subject cities, their moderate constitution once secured, aimed at complete liberty and scorned the sham independence proffered them by the Athenians."{628} Sparta offered them real freedom. That the Sparta system of "harmosts", as the Spartan governors were called, might speedily prove more oppressive than any feature of the hated Athenian rule the cities were presently to discover.{629} But when at last a Spartan fleet gave the Ionian and other cities the chance to cut loose from Athens, small wonder that they seized the opportunity and risked the future. Better to fly to evils none can anticipate than abide content with ills that have been burdensome so long.

Only naval power could maintain or recover what naval power once had gained. In urgent

haste the Athenians despatched squadron after squadron to the scene of war as fast as the vessels could be equipped and launched. Strombichides took out 8 to Samos, and was followed in quick succession by 12 under Thrasycles, 16 under Diomedon, 10 under Leon. Lesbos and Clazomenae were recaptured. Miletus was blockaded. Chios was so sorely harried that by the winter of 412 B.C. it seemed on the point of falling. Forty-eight more ships under Phrynichus and his colleagues reached Ionian waters. Astyochus the Spartan admiral, a quarrelsome blunderer, received reinforcements on his part as well. The Athenian siege of Miletus was raised. The theatre of war now presented a curious chess-board appearance. On the coast of Asia Minor the two sides were intermixed in veritable chequer pattern. On the north was Lesbos, now once more, after its short revolt, in Athenian hands. To the south of Lesbos, Chios and Erythrae, on the mainland opposite Chios, were rebels against Athens. Colophon on the mainland south-east of Erythrae had long been in Persian hands, and Ephesus beyond it had recently been taken by the Great King's forces. Between Colophon and Ephesus lay Notium, still loyal to Athens. The southernmost of the three great islands, Samos, had just been secured to Athens by a democratic revolution, and a counter oligarchic conspiracy in the following year 411 B.C. was abortive.[{630}] Samos was invaluable to Athens. The island was the base of all her naval operations of the year. From it attacks could be directed both against Chios on the north and against Miletus, now occupied by a Persian garrison, on the south. Without Samian fidelity Athens could hardly have survived, as Thucydides himself expressly testifies.[{631}] Lade Island was also a useful base for Athenian operations against Miletus. Finally, still further to the south, Cnidus and Rhodes had passed over to the Spartan side.

All through the year 412 B.C. the fleets avoided decisive battle, and contented themselves, so far as naval warfare went, with some slight and indeterminate engagements, the most serious of which was the defeat of the Athenian admiral Charminus on a misty morning off Syme Island by Astyochus. Charminus lost six ships but sank three of the enemy and disabled others.[{632}] When winter came, both navies withdrew to winter quarters, the Athenians, now over a hundred strong, to Samos, the Peloponnesians, with an equal number of ships, to Rhodes. Later in the winter the Peloponnesians shifted their station to Miletus. The fleets now lay face to face. The command of the sea still hung in the balance. But Athens' enemies had ruefully to admit that against all expectation she had managed to survive the year. Their disconsolateness was the measure of her success. Still the most terrible of dangers threatened her. Far in the eastern recesses of the bight of the Mediterranean there lay the menace of a huge Phoenician fleet, 147 sail strong, at the entire disposal of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, ally and

paymaster of the Spartans. “If he had chosen to finish the war”, Thucydides roundly declares, “finished it would have been, once and for all, as any one may see. The Spartans were already a match for the Athenians. Had Tissaphernes brought up the ships he must have given the Spartans the victory.”{633} The satrap did not bring up the ships even next year when he went to Aspendus and called them to him there. For now at his side was Alcibiades, fugitive once more, this time from Sparta and King Agis’ wrath on behalf of his own outraged honour. The son whom Timaea his wife bore was of Alcibiades’ begetting, the king declared. In fact later, on the death of Agis, the king’s brother, Agesilaus, succeeded him on the throne instead of the boy, then thirteen years of age, because of the doubtful legitimacy of the latter. Agis’ wife Timaea, however, hotly denied this accusation. As the boy told his uncle, his mother was in a better position to know the truth.{634} But Agis was angry, and sent orders to Astyochus to arrest and execute Alcibiades. The Athenian had eluded capture and taken refuge with the satrap, gaining the latter’s favour both by his personal charm and by the advice so sagely tendered him. Let the Greeks wear one another out, urged Alcibiades. Help neither side. How easy then will be the final conquest for your king of an exhausted Greece! So at last the exile saved his own city and rendered her the first of his new services.{635}

Thus the new year 411 B.C. dawned upon Athens more brightly than had done the preceding year of crisis through which she had, not without wonder, struggled. By her one fleet the city still lived and by her one fleet alone. And now there might be once again at her disposal the services of a man whose military abilities were unrivalled. One statesman at Athens, himself a naval commander, Theramenes, realised that upon Alcibiades Athens’ victory in the coming struggle might well depend.

### *§ 3. The Oligarchic Revolution of 411 B.C.*

Alcibiades had long been anxious to have his sentence of condemnation revoked and himself recalled from his exile by his repentant fellow-citizens. Now in the spring of 411 B.C., with bitter peril threatening him from Sparta, and dependent as he was upon the capricious favour of a shifty satrap for his very liberty and life, he was more than ever eager to win his restoration home. Friends he had in plenty both in the fleet at Samos and in the city. His foes were also many and implacable. The democracy had sentenced him to death. The leading oligarchs distrusted a man “ill-suited to an oligarchy,”{636} and Phrynichus among these was a man of note. He must rely on the great middle bourgeois class for his pardon and recall, and in chief upon Theramenes, this party’s leader. To overthrow the democracy and to trick the

extremists, incidentally at the same time to serve his city's real need, he, a very master of intrigue at a time of many plots and wiles, devised his plan and achieved his object.

From Tissaphernes' side in the city of Magnesia he wrote to friendly captains of the fleet at Samos, his "good men and true". Persia might yet be won over to Athens' cause by his own good offices—such was the gist of his messages—but on one condition only. The great king could have no dealings with the "villainous democracy"{637} Let them change their constitution to an oligarchy, and he could secure for them Tissaphernes as a friend. Very gladly then would he himself return and cast his lot in with them.{638}

Peisander hastened to Athens and bruited the idea abroad. At Samos Phrynichus denounced Alcibiades in vain but intrigued against him elaborately, not without success. At Athens violent opposition was aroused. Religious folk were above all horrified. The priestly families "called heaven and earth to witness that they must never recall a man banished for the profanation of the holy Mysteries." The time was past for the silly scruples of the pious. Peisander bluntly appealed to stark necessity. "What does the Constitution matter", he asked, "compared with the real chance of Persian aid? And Alcibiades is the only man alive who can save us."{639}

The people dolefully agreed that the argument was irresistible. Peisander was despatched back to clinch the bargain with the satrap. Before he sailed, he bade the Oligarchic Clubs work in his absence for the democracy's subversion. At his bidding too, the people deposed Phrynichus, Alcibiades' enemy, from his command.

Tissaphernes was not ready thus abruptly to change sides. Alcibiades neither could induce him, nor was the Athenian very eager to see Peisander's party in control at Athens. Between them they contrived that the terms proposed to Peisander for the Persian aid should be impossible of acceptance by any honourable Athenian. Peisander and his fellow-envoys returned in anger to Samos.{640}

But the extremists had by this time compromised themselves too openly and too hopelessly to draw back. If they would save their skins they must carry through the Oligarchic Revolution at Athens, and leave the trickster Alcibiades out of further account. Phrynichus now could throw himself heartily into their designs. Peisander and he returned to Athens. Upon their arrival they found the revolution already more than half accomplished. The Clubs had done their work well. Panic and suspicion reigned supreme in the city. No man knew if he could trust his neighbour. Youthful conspirators had assassinated one miserable demagogue,

Androcles, Alcibiades' chief enemy and accuser four years ago. "A few others, who were inconvenient to them, they disposed of secretly in the like fashion." So terrorised were the citizens that the revolution could now be effected not by violence but with all due forms of law. At a special Assembly of the People, summoned to meet at the Temple of Poseidon at Colonus outside the city walls, the existing Magistracies and Council were abolished, and all power was entrusted for the moment to a new Council, the "Four Hundred", with authority to call the "Five Thousand" together whenever they pleased.{641}

This latter provision was a sop for Theramenes and his "Moderates", whose cooperation and support the extremist leaders, Antiphon, Peisander, and Phrynichus, had found it desirable to secure. For, in spite of all argumentation and terrorism, it was, as Thucydides himself says, "certainly not an easy thing, one hundred years after the fall of the tyrants, to destroy the liberties of the Athenians, who were not only a free, but during more than one half of this time had been an imperial people."{642} When the victory was won, then the tug-of-war between the two victorious allies might be expected to begin.

The "Four Hundred", armed with daggers and escorted by a lusty band of young adherents, returned to the city, and, entering the Council Chamber, bade the "Five Hundred", the democratic Councillors, then actually in session, pack up and begone. Contemptuously, the newcomers offered them the rest of their wages for the year. The old Councillors took their pay and so went home. The English historian Grote comments with sad severity upon their pusillanimous meekness. Yet money is money in a beleaguered city, and a dagger consorts ill with old age. "Thy money perish with thee", might be heroic. But the wrong men would have perished.

The Revolution was an accomplished fact. The "Oligarchy of the Four Hundred" ruled Athens.

No exiles were recalled, lest Alcibiades should return. Negotiations for peace were opened with Sparta. Envoys were sent to Samos to secure the acceptance by the fleet of the new Constitution and its rulers.

Meanwhile at Samos not a little had been happening. The attempted oligarchic movement there had been a dismal failure, its one and only success the assassination of the unlucky Hyperbolus in his peaceful habitation on that island.{643} The sailors rose in their wrath. They deposed all their officers and elected the trustiest democrats in their room. Chief among these

were two men, Thrasybulus and Thrasylus, henceforth to do their country noble service. The news of the revolution at Athens then reached them. The sailors were indignant and resolute. “The city has revolted from us”, man said to man; “they were not disloyal to Athens. Here at Samos was the true Athens, and nothing that counted was really lost.”{644}

In 1849, that black year for liberty, the dastardly trickery of the French general Oudinot carried the Janiculum at Rome and drove Garibaldi with his handful of heroic Republicans out from the city at last. Before they marched away, some doomed to exile, the most of them to death, the great leader encouraged his men. “Dovunque saremo, colà sarà Roma,” he cried to them. “Wherever we are, there is Rome.” In this same spirit in old days did the “Athenian people at Samos”{645} cheer one another and carry on the war.

Then the sailors held an Assembly and, at Thrasybulus’ urging, recalled Alcibiades at last. He came. With vaunting words of his influence with Tissaphernes,{646} he promised the Persian’s aid. Greatly encouraged, they elected him general, and would have sailed at once against Athens. He restrained them. First he must make sure of Tissaphernes and his Phoenician fleet, he urged. Presently the envoys from the “Four Hundred” appeared, with soft words deprecating the sailors’ anger. The new Government were no traitors, they pleaded. It had been foully slandered by lying reports. It was bent on the war as keenly as had been the old. All in turn should have a part in the administration. The more the envoys lied, the more furiously the men raged. “Sail, sail,” they cried. “To Peiraeus!” Again Alcibiades restrained them. “And in this”, declares Thucydides, “he did the most signal of services to the State. For if the excited men at Samos had sailed against their fellow-citizens, the enemy would instantly have gained possession of Ionia and the Hellespont. This he prevented. And at that moment there was no other living man who could have held in the crowd. But he kept them from the expedition, and with sharp words protected the envoys from the fury of personal assailants.”{647}

Alcibiades’ own message sent to Athens by the mouth of the envoys was brief and pointed enough. “He had no objection to the rule of the Five Thousand, but they must dismiss the Four Hundred and establish the old Council of the Five Hundred as before. Of any savings to be devoted to better supplies for the troops he most heartily approved. Above all let them hold out stoutly and make no yielding to the enemy.”

The fact was that things had gone badly awry at Athens. The wrong party in the revolution had come out on top. Alcibiades was minded to do everything in his power to encourage Theramenes and the Moderates to make a stand against the Extremists. He had sufficient

confidence in the Moderate leader to refuse to sacrifice the military situation in the eastern Aegean to any desire to intervene at Athens on his behalf. Moreover, the Sailors were in no mind to rest content with any rival to their own beloved democracy. The risk which Alcibiades ran on the city's account was very grave. For treachery now sought to deliver her up to the enemy. But his confidence in Theramenes' skill and ultimate success was justified by the event.

That statesman daily grew more and more discontented and uneasy. Very clearly his colleagues, the Extremists, had not the least intention of summoning the Five Thousand in actuality. Lists might be drawn up. Schemes of government-sharing, of compromise, might be formulated, published, discussed, and in due course, together with precedents from earlier history invented for the occasion, the whole mass of documents and manifestos might find its way into the Athenian archives, thence to be disinterred many years later and unintelligently compiled into a would-be history.{648} But the whole of these promises and programmes were just a sham. The Extremists had seized the power and were resolved to retain it. Their rule, based on force, became stained by deeds of cruelty and violence. Feeling their position ever more insecure, Antiphon and his colleagues began to dream of desperate measures. Thucydides has sketched in clear terms their motives and their aims. "What would have pleased them best would have been to keep both the Oligarchy and the Empire; failing this, to keep the Oligarchy, the ships, the walls, and their independence. But if this too should prove impossible, retain the Oligarchy they would in any case. To a restored democracy they would be the first victims. Therefore they would bring the enemy in and make terms with them, not caring if thereby the city lost walls, ships, everything, if so be they could save their own lives."{649} They started to build a fort at the extreme end of the mole at Peiraeus harbour mouth, called Eetioneia. This when finished would command the entrance, and from it at any moment they could let the Spartans in. And Antiphon, Phrynichus, and others hastened to Sparta to beg for peace on any terms.

Then at last Theramenes and Aristocrates his colleague, a man of like mind, made their stand. Phrynichus, returning from Sparta, was struck down in open daylight in the street, just as he left the Council Chamber, and slain. It had been better for him, unlike David, if he had never left his sheepfolds. A Spartan squadron of 42 ships, professedly on its way to Euboea, was hovering in the offing. There was rioting at Eetioneia fort. Theramenes appeared on the scene. "What good is the fort?" the soldier builders, men of Aristocrates' command, shouted at him. "Were it not better destroyed?" "If that is your opinion, men, it is mine also," Theramenes

replied. Shouting for the “Five Thousand”, the troops destroyed the unfinished fort. An Assembly was demanded and duly called. When it was on the point of meeting, a cry “The enemy fleet!” arose. The crowd rushed helter-skelter down to Peiraeus. The Spartan squadron passed the harbour by and disappeared, sailing round Sunium, and putting in to Oropus, which in the preceding year had been betrayed to the Boeotians.[{650}] Manning 36 ships, the Athenians under an admiral Thymochares pursued after. Thymochares landed at Eretria, seven miles away. The Spartan fleet rushed down upon him when his crews were scattered through the houses seeking food. The Eretrians had been in no mind to help them to embark quickly by giving them a market on the shore. Putting out in disorder one by one, the Athenian ships were routed with ease. Twenty-two were captured. The Eretrians cut the throats of any men who fled to them for refuge. Euboea, which was “all in all” to Athens, was lost to her. The whole island, excepting only the cleruchy of Oreus in the extreme north, revolted. Had the Spartans only shown more enterprise, comments Thucydides, they could now have so blockaded Peiraeus as to compel the fleet at Samos to hasten home to save the city. Then the entire Athenian Empire would have fallen into the enemy’s hands. “But on this, as on many other occasions, the Spartans proved themselves to be the most convenient enemies whom the Athenians could possibly have had.”[{651}] They made no further use of the surprising victory of Eretria.

It was Theramenes after all who plucked good from this, the extremest of Athens’ perils. The people met. The Four Hundred were deposed. The “Constitution of the Five Thousand” was set up in their stead, with its two working principles, a “hoplite franchise” and “no pay for office.” The Extremist leaders hastened to escape. Most, with Peisander, slipped away to Decelea. They were condemned to death in their absence. Peisander vanishes after this from record. The corpse of Phrynichus was disinterred and his remains were cast out over the frontier. Honours were bestowed on his slayers. Antiphon, now an old man, aged nearly seventy, was caught and brought to trial. In his defence he made, Thucydides his pupil says, “undoubtedly the best speech ever made by any man put on trial on a capital charge down to my time.”[{652}] The people applauded, condemned, and executed him. His house was razed to the ground, and its site marked with an inscription, “Antiphon the traitor”. The famous speech is lost. Another lesser man, Archeptolemus, was also caught and executed. In all these proceedings Theramenes played a leading part. One conspirator, Aristarchus, collected a small band of barbarian archers and marched away off to Oenoe, which Athenian fort was then being besieged by Corinthians and Boeotians. The traitor general bade the garrison surrender. In ignorance of the events in Athens it obeyed. So the Boeotians took Oenoe.

“The government of the Five Thousand”, says Thucydides, “in its early days was the best which the Athenians ever enjoyed within my memory. Oligarchy and Democracy were duly blended. Athens, after the miserable state into which she had fallen, was able once again to raise her head.”{653}

And now at last Theramenes reached his object. A vote was passed to bring Alcibiades and others with him back from exile. And a message was sent to him and to the army at Samos bidding them act with vigour.

That general, meanwhile, had sailed from Samos to Caunus and Phaselis, avowing his intention of meeting Tissaphernes at Aspendus. If he could not bring the Phoenician fleet in triumph back to Samos as allies, at least he hoped to hinder it from joining the enemy. Presently he returned to Samos, able at least to declare that he had achieved the latter object. In his absence the whole naval situation has changed for the better. The rival fleets have joined battle at last and victory has rested with the Athenians. It remained for Alcibiades to crown the work. Before he sets his hand to it, Thucydides’ history has come to its abrupt conclusion.

The dismal Oligarchic Revolution of the year 411 B.C. did in the end serve Athens well. It cleared the air of faction. It left city and fleet once again of one heart and soul. It, and it only, restored Alcibiades to the service of his country. He joins with Theramenes, Thrasybulus, Thrasylus, now, even at the eleventh hour, to win the day for Athens, until party bitterness rears its ugly head once more and dashes the cup of victory from her lips forever.

### *§ 4. The battle of Cynossema*

In the summer of 411 B.C. the Spartan admiral Astyochus went home. A bungler to the last, he left behind him an alienated Tissaphernes, estranged allies, discontented and despondent sailors. His successor Mindarus, a man of different calibre, arrived to take over the command at Miletus in August. It was not long before he decided to transfer the scene of operations from the Ionian seaboard to the Hellespont, where were cities already in revolt against Athens, and a satrap, Pharnabazus, who was whole-heartedly devoted to the Spartan cause. In the spring a Spartan, Dercyllidas, had marched from Miletus to the district and brought the cities of Abydos and Lampsacus over to his side. The Athenian Strombichides had sailed in hot haste to the rescue, but, though he recovered Lampsacus, Abydos remained in Spartan and Persian hands. Strombichides had to content himself with placing a garrison in Sestos on the European side of the strait opposite the rebel city. In July a Spartan squadron of 40 ships had been despatched

under Clearchus from Miletus to the Hellespont. Shattered by a storm, most returned to their starting-point, but 10 ships reached their destination under a Megarian, Helixus, and on their arrival the great city of Byzantium revolted against Athens. Her example was followed by Calchedon and Cyzicus. The coming of the main Spartan fleet might close both Bosporus and Hellespont permanently against Athenian ships. And as soon as Euboea was lost (which very shortly befell, in early September) Athens must rely exclusively upon the Black Sea trade for the feeding of the swarming populace.

There was now a small squadron of 16 Spartan ships at Abydos, and at Byzantium as a guard to the harbour 8 others. In Sestos harbour lay 18 Athenian warships. The new admiral Mindarus sent word to the ships at Abydos to keep the closest possible watch over the enemy vessels opposite them at Sestos until he himself came. Then he set sail for the north with his entire fleet of 73 ships.

His dash for the Hellespont was a fine piece of work and deserves the minute description bestowed upon it by both Thucydides and Grote.[{654}] Controversy rages over some points of detail but neither tarnishes the Spartan's feat nor solves all difficulties.

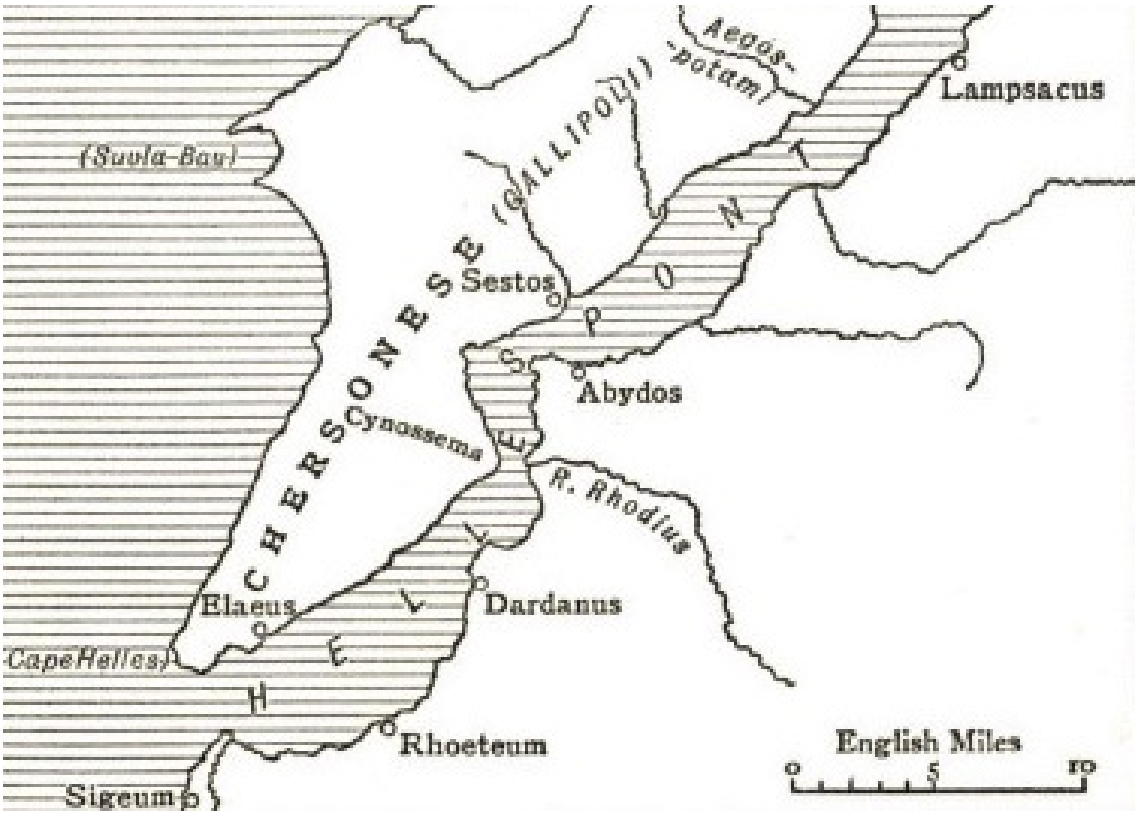
Slipping on a September day out of Miletus harbour, Mindarus and his 73 ships reached and got by the southern coast of Samos undetected by the Athenian Thrasylus, who lay there with 55 ships in waiting to intercept the passage. The first danger seemed past and only a second Athenian squadron at Lesbos remained to be eluded. But a sudden storm sprang up and drove Mindarus to Icaros island for shelter. Here he lay for five or six days till the storm abated. Then he ran north to Chios city and put in there for a couple of days to obtain provisions and money for his sailors from the Chians.

The delay at Icaros brought Thrasylus and his 55 ships in hot haste upon his heels from Samos. To the Athenian's profound relief he found, on reaching Chios, that the Spartan fleet still lay in Chios city's harbour. Thrasylus at once proceeded past the island on his voyage to Lesbos, where he joined his colleague Thrasybulus. The latter had but a dozen ships under his command. The revolt of Eresus, on the south-west coast of Lesbos, had called him earlier to this island. With their united fleet of 67 warships the two admirals were confident of their ability to close the passage north against Mindarus and his fleet.

And so, indeed, they might have closed it had they remained on guard at their first station at Methymna on the north coast of Lesbos. From this point of observation the Spartan could not

have passed by unobserved, whether he chose the narrow strait between the island and the mainland or bore out to sea leaving Lesbos away on his starboard quarter. But the Athenians were minded to spend the time of waiting usefully in operations against the rebel Eresus. They brought their fleet round from Methymna and blockaded the town on the open sea, setting scouts meanwhile to watch the channel between Lesbos and the mainland.

Their blunder was a grave one, and Mindarus seized the lucky chance. On the third day after his arrival at Chios city the Spartan made his dash to get through the channel. Hugging the northern mainland coast at Mimas promontory to the N.N.E. of Chios, he struck straight across to Phocaea, and so, still clinging to the shore, made his way up past Cyme to Arginusae Islands, which he reached at evening. The south-easterly coast of Lesbos lay on his port beam. The hostile squadron at Eresus, 50 miles away, had no inkling as yet of his coming. In the gloom of the evening the Athenian scouts on Lesbos had failed to descry the ships as these crept under cover of Arginusae islets, and sent no tidings to their admirals at Eresus. Next morning Mindarus started before daybreak northwards up the channel. No enemy ship appeared. Shortly before midnight the Spartan proudly brought his weary but entire squadron up the waters of the Hellespont, and berthed them at Sigeum, Rhoeteum, and other friendly ports. He had compassed 150 miles in two days, and not only eluded the enemy at Eresus but bade fair to snap up the small Athenian squadron of 18 ships in Sestos harbour before the main Athenian fleet could arrive upon the scene to save them.




But the captains at Sestos were not so easily caught napping. They had got scouts posted out on the Gallipoli coast towards the open sea. Beacons flared up in the darkness of the night. On the opposite coast by Rhoeteum there was seen the flame of many watch fires. The captains took instant alarm. While their foes at Abydos a mile away across the water slumbered, the 18 Athenian ships crept silently that same night out of Sestos harbour and rowed hard downstream, hugging the northern shore, making for Elaeus, 14 miles away, and the comparative safety of the open sea. Vain excuses have been made for the Spartans at Abydos. There is small doubt that, unmindful of Mindarus' own orders, they were all soundly asleep in the small hours of the morning.

Dawn caught the 18 fugitives when they were just off Rhoeteum. Mindarus saw them and at once gave chase. The long 18 hours' spell of rowing the day before had not abated the sailors' keenness or their admiral's watchfulness. The Athenians had a fair start and were comparatively fresh. The most of them made good their escape. But three were captured off Elaeus and a fourth off the coast of Imbros Island in the open Aegean, 12 miles out beyond Cape Helles, the point of Gallipoli. Then Mindarus called off the pursuit. Two of his ships in the ardour of the chase were already out of view, hull down. With the rest he returned to the Hellespont and lay off the European shore for the rest of that day threatening Elaeus. Here the

abashed squadron of 16 ships joined him from Abydos. When evening fell the ships rowed up stream again and all came to safe anchorage in Abydos harbour. The fleet was 86 strong. One ship has vanished unaccountably from Thucydides' narrative.

Then, sore and angry, Thrasybulus and Thrasylus, aware at last of Mindarus' voyage, came hurrying to Elaeus. The fate of their blear-eyed scouts on Lesbos is not reported. The admirals had the solitary and very minor satisfaction of capturing *en route* the two venturesome enemy ships which had pursued too far and by sheer bad hap fell in with the enemy fleet on their return. At Elaeus some of the 14 ships which had made good their flight from Sestos came in presently to rejoin. In all, Thrasybulus and Thrasylus mustered 76 ships at Elaeus. Fourteen miles away up stream at Abydos Mindarus lay with his 86. Between the two stations, some eight miles from Elaeus, the promontory of Kilid Bahr juts out from the European coast at the entrance to the narrows opposite Chanak, and the width of the strait here is little over 1000 yards. This promontory the Greeks called Cynossema, "The dog's tomb." Opposite it on the Asiatic side a little river, the Rhodius (Meidius or Pydius), found its way into the sea.[{655}]

For five days both fleets rested, making ready. On the sixth day there was fought a battle which wins some special note as being the last of all the many battles both by sea and land narrated by Thucydides.[{656}]

In the morning of that sixth day the Athenians, putting out from Elaeus, proceeded in single line ahead up-stream in the direction of Sestos. Thereupon Mindarus for his part also sallied out from Abydos, having somehow added two more ships to his 86, and came, also in single line ahead, coasting down the Asiatic shore to meet the enemy. In both lines a distance of from 100 to 150 yards separated ship from ship. The Athenians' line had probably the greater tendency to straggle as they had rowed against the current three times as far as the Spartans with it when the fight was joined.[{657}]

Both fleets were now opposite one another and strung out to a distance of five or six miles when they turned, each to face the foe. The Athenian van, now become the left wing, under Thrasylus had already rounded Cynossema promontory and was therefore out of sight of the rest of the fleet. Mindarus sent against it his Syracusan contingent, which was of much the same strength, and the battle here, speedily joined, was at first a detached engagement by which Thrasylus was kept very busily occupied. Meanwhile the Spartan admiral, having a dozen more ships than the enemy and the advantage of the current, was minded to cut the Athenians off from any hope of escaping to the open sea, and set his best ships rowing fast downstream to

overlap his opponent Thrasybulus' line. The latter was compelled to conform his own movements to the threat. Availing himself of the superior skill of his helmsmen, he checked the advance of his own, the rear, squadron up channel, and, turning the ships, rowed fast downstream again. Mindarus' attempt to use his own greater numbers to outflank the enemy was baffled.{658} But the Spartan both handled his ships ably and fought them well, and Thrasybulus had to content himself with keeping the enemy at bay. Then Mindarus' tactics by which he had drawn the Athenians so far down stream won their reward. Their weakened centre was charged furiously and driven right back on shore. Neither Thrasybulus to the south nor Thrasylus round the headland to the north could give it any aid. Many of the pursuing Peloponnesians leapt ashore to seize the enemy craft as these lay helpless on the strand. Others began chasing fugitives in every direction over the waters of the Narrows.

Like Phormio in somewhat similar plight long ago at Naupactus, Thrasybulus snatched victory out of the very jaws of defeat. Seeing the discomfiture of his centre and the general confusion of the mêlée, he stopped his further extension, turned, and bearing hard down on Mindarus' squadron, routed it. Following up their victory, the Athenian vessels came rushing in upon the heedless and disarrayed ships of the Peloponnesian centre. Smitten with sudden panic, these too fled northwards for shelter at Abydos. Their flight brought them round Cynossema promontory down on top of their Syracusan allies, who themselves were at the moment being pressed slowly backwards by Thrasylus and his men. At once the Syracusans also gave up the day as lost, and fled so promptly that they lost but a single ship. The mouth of the Meidius river gave shelter to some, Abydos to others. Victory rested with the Athenians. In actual losses indeed it was "not very pronounced." Mindarus lost 21 ships; the Athenians, 15. But Thrasybulus and Thrasylus made good use of the day's success. Four days later they sailed against the rebel city Cyzicus and retook it. Near the town they fell in with the Byzantium squadron of eight ships and seized them all. And of still greater value were the more remote consequences of the victory.

Mindarus was still able to dispute on equal terms for the command of the sea. But Alcibiades was now on his way north with some two dozen more ships. The Spartan for his part therefore stood in urgent need of reinforcements. There was at the time cruising off Euboea a Peloponnesian squadron of 50 vessels. This fleet occasioned poignant anxiety to Theramenes in Athens. After the disaster at Eretria he had but a sorry handful of ships left to guard Peiraeus should the fifty descend upon him. The victory of Cynossema relieved Athens

of this danger. Mindarus had moved down to Elaeus when the enemy had passed upwards into the sea of Marmora. From his new station he sent off two officers in hot haste to bid the Euboean squadron sail at once to join him in the Hellespont. His orders were obeyed, and Athens herself breathed freely once more. But as the fifty rounded Athos a hurricane burst upon them and utterly destroyed the greater number. Only a few battered vessels presently reached the Hellespont. The worst of luck dogged Mindarus. For the next year's fighting he can muster 80 ships at most.

There remained that consequence of their victory which was happiest of all for the Athenians. By it the sailors regained their lost morale. Just as on land the victory of Mantinea in 418 B.C. had restored to the Spartan that prestige and confidence which had been shattered by the surrender at Sphacteria seven years earlier, so, says Thucydides, "nothing could have been more opportune for the Athenians than was this victory at sea. For some time past they had been living in dread of the Peloponnesian navy, by reason of the disaster in Sicily and of some small minor defeats. Now they ceased to despise themselves or think greatly of their enemies' seamanship."{659} So quick to elation as to depression were the Greeks. And "so infinitely sensitive is the moral atmosphere in war." Nor was this restored confidence confined to the sailors of the victorious fleet. The citizens at home plucked up heart again and believed that all things, even victory, might be possible if they set stoutly to work again.

The year 411 B.C. drew out to its close. Want of supplies dispersed the Athenian fleet, leaving but 40 vessels at Sestos. Mindarus sailed where he liked up and down the northern waters. In November there was some fighting, of no great importance, off Abydos. The spring of 410 B.C. arrived. In March Mindarus recovered Cyzicus. From many quarters reinforcements were sped to the Athenians in the Hellespont. There gathered together at Sestos Thrasybulus once again, coming with 20 ships from Thasos, Theramenes with 20 more from Macedonia, and Alcibiades himself from Lesbos. Their combined fleet outnumbered Mindarus' navy for the first time. When all was ready the three Athenian admirals with 86 ships sailed against the Spartan and put in to Proconnesus Island, north of the promontory of Cyzicus. In Cyzicus town was Mindarus with a fleet, variously estimated at 60 or 80 vessels. He was supported on the neighbouring mainland by a Persian army and the presence of the Persian satrap Pharnabazus himself. The resulting "battle of Cyzicus" was, what Cynossema had not been, a "decisive" one.{660}

## CHAPTER XI—THE END OF THE WAR

### *§ 1. The triumph and the fall of Alcibiades*

THE promontory of Cyzicus (Kapa Dagh) juts out from the Asiatic coast into the Sea of Marmora some seventy miles south-west of Constantinople. A mile of sand now joins it to the mainland. In the fifth century B.C. it was an island, and the bridge connection of the ancient city with the opposite shore was Alexander's work later. Here in March 410 B.C. the three Athenian admirals, Alcibiades, Theramenes, and Thrasybulus, won a great double victory on sea and land over the opposing Peloponnesian, Syracusan, and Persian forces under Mindarus the Spartan and Pharnabazus the satrap.

Three ancient accounts of this battle survive, those of Xenophon, Diodorus (*i.e.* Ephorus), and Plutarch, the last being little but a blend of the others.[{661}] Ephorus and Xenophon do not agree together and the former's is the completer story. Xenophon was a better soldier of fortune than he was a military historian. Thucydides' untimely death was an irreparable blow to the understanding of the last seven years of the great war. There is little temptation to discourse at any length upon the fighting of these years.

Mindarus, so runs the one story, was exercising his fleet outside Cyzicus' harbour on the morning following the Athenians' arrival at Proconnesus. It was a day of mist and rain. The enemy fleet was upon him before he was aware. The rival and better account gives credit to Alcibiades rather than to the weather. The Spartan was lured out of harbour by sight of a squadron of only 40 ships under Alcibiades. The opportunity could not be neglected. With twice the number of warships Mindarus sallied out to the attack. When he had been enticed far enough from land, the two other Athenian squadrons of Theramenes and Thrasybulus (46 ships in all), hitherto lurking out of sight, slipped in between him and the coast and cut him off from the harbour. He fled to the mainland shore and the support there of the Persian army. The Athenians pursued, and, having disposed of the enemy's fleet, landed troops to ensure the capture of the vessels. A fierce struggle on land followed in which at last they gained the day. The hostile infantry were routed. The Persian cavalry stopped any prolonged pursuit. Mindarus himself, "fighting heroically", was slain. The entire Peloponnesian fleet was destroyed or captured. The battle is the more famous for that most "laconic" of all despatches from a seat of war which Mindarus' secretary sent home to Sparta and the Athenians intercepted on the way. It consisted of just eleven words: "Ships gone. Mindarus dead. Men starving. Don't know what

to do."[{662}]

The victory of Cyzicus ensured the Athenian reconquest of the Hellespont and their mastery of the sea for the next two years. Alcibiades immediately proceeded from one success to another. The Persians guarded their own coast. But Cyzicus was at once recaptured; Perinthus submitted; Selymbria made a money contribution to the Athenian war-chest. A toll-house was established on the Asiatic shore at Chrysopolis, exactly opposite Byzantium, the Scutari of today, and the name of the "Golden City" must be taken of good omen for the revenues now derived from all ships passing through the Bosporus, even though both Byzantium itself and Calchedon, just to the south of Chrysopolis, still defied the Athenians. Off the Ionian coast, however, where Thrasylus conducted some naval operations in the early summer of this year, the Athenians suffered a failure at Colophon and an actual defeat on land at Ephesus. Then Thrasylus rejoined Alcibiades at Sestos, and a victory won over Pharnabazus' army at Abydos restored Athenian confidence and tie cheerfulness of the troops.

The battle at Cyzicus induced Sparta to propose peace to Athens. The ephor Endius himself brought her the offer of it on the terms of the *status quo*.[{663}] By this time already it seems that the Constitution of the Five Thousand had passed away and the old Democracy had been fully restored. At least a new demagogue arises in the person of one Cleophon, the "lyre-maker", successor to Cleon, a man of Cleon's stamp and forcefulness without his greater predecessor's ability or greed, though, like Cleon, pre-eminently a financial expert.[{664}] Like Cleon too, Cleophonis target for the fury of the Comic dramatists of his day, Aristophanes himself leading the attack, and for the reprobation by many a modern writer, though Grote comes manfully ever and again to his defence.

His mother had Thracian blood in her veins and the son suffered many gibes at his low barbarian origin and uncouth speech:

> "On the lips of that foreigner base,
> Of Athens the bane and disgrace,
> There is shrieking, his kinsman by race,
> The garrulous swallow of Thrace."[{665}]

(The swallow, like the nightingale, was always "a foreigner" in classical Greece.)

And the poet Plato devoted an entire comedy, now lost, to Cleophon's discredit.

Presently the demagogue met a violent death.

"Almost all the objects of Comedy's attacks found such an end and Comedy laughs at their fate."{666}

So now in 410 B.C. at Athens there was heard "the shrill voice of the demagogue Cleophon denouncing death"{667} to those who wished for peace. The episcopal violence of Bishop Thirlwall is greater:

"Cleophon, one of the upstart demagogues who from time to time pushed themselves forward into a disgraceful notoriety and a pernicious influence."

A Die-hard on a Glasgow Socialist could not be fiercer than is the handling of the Athenian "Radical" by the worthy Bishop.

Cleophon had his way. The people rejected Sparta's offers and Endius went home. Had Alcibiades, the Spartan's old acquaintance, or had Theramenes been then in Athens, the victory which they had won might have led to peace, or at least to further negotiations for better terms. But Grote has made good his defence of Cleophon on this occasion.{668} The storm-tossed ship seemed at last riding on the full tide of victory, and the terms proposed were inadequate, even if the request for peace were sincere. How could Athens agree to the loss of Euboea, to the Spartan grip of the Bosporus? The rejection of the peace-offer did her no immediate hurt. Only, as summer passed into winter and Sparta recovered Pylos, and moreover Megara regained Nisaea,{669} there must have been in Athens men who looked askance at Cleophon as he went swaggering through the streets. But Cleophon had just restored the daily pay of two obols for jurymen{670} (Cleon's three obols was a sum out of reach of men's dreams) and his position was impregnable.

So the war went on. Sparta in 409 B.C. seemed exhausted. In spite of all Pharnabazus' efforts, Alcibiades in this year regained complete control of the Bosporus for his city, reducing Calchedon and Selymbria, and, after some weary months of siege, capturing Byzantium itself by betrayal in the winter of the year. The autonomy bestowed on Selymbria shows that he had learnt at least one lesson from the war.{671} It was but a fair recognition of his brilliant exploits and of this crowning mercy of Byzantium that in 408 B.C. the people at home elected him general, with Thrasybulus and Conon as his colleagues. This was an extraordinary election and conferred upon the three supreme powers of command. Later, at Alcibiades' special request, Adeimantus and Aristocrates were associated with them.{672}

Then at last, after seven years' absence, Alcibiades returned to his city. He had done this perhaps two years' sooner had not the Democracy so soon displaced Theramenes' "Middle-

Party Constitution". But besides there had been much work to do abroad. Now the work seemed well-nigh done. Athenian envoys under Pharnabazus' escort were already travelling on the high road to Susa. Athens again was supreme upon the seas. All this was in the main due to the brilliant admiral. Yet, even so, it was with hesitation that he drew near to the city which had condemned him to death. His friends waved welcome and encouragement to him from the quays. The people had but newly honoured him. Taking his courage in both hands, Alcibiades landed at Peiraeus harbour on the 25th day of the Attic month Thargelion (about June 16), 408 B.C.

It chanced to be the day of the "Plynteria" ceremony, when the holy image of Athens' Patron Goddess, Athena Polias, received its annual purification and the statue was covered over from the citizens' eyes. This was a "dies nefastus" in the Attic calendar, when no business could be done. The city lacked the divine presence. On this day of all others Alcibiades came back home. The superstitious shook their heads and whispered. What omen could be more unlucky? Had not the goddess herself veiled her face against the *revenant* whose impiety had defiled her city?

At least it was a public holiday and the whole populace was in the streets. The historian Xenophon is rarely open to the merry gibe flung by Alan Breck against David Balfour. He is but seldom "a man of no small penetration". At this point, however, he indulges himself in a long analysis of the diverse sentiments of the Athenians towards Alcibiades. There were many who expected that he would make himself tyrant, and were agreeably disappointed when their expectations failed. Plutarch adds that some urged this course upon him. Did his heart fail him? All such misread the man's character from the first. He, like Roman Pompey, would indeed be "princeps reipublicae", but the Republic should be a real one still.

Athenian mob-psychology requires no such weariful analysis. Alcibiades had returned in triumph, victor in many a hard-fought fight. He was acclaimed with an ovation of welcome, crowned with garlands, feted with enthusiastic rejoicings. No voice or hand was raised against him. Only a single sullen priest muttered words of doubtful import. His brethren bowed to the people's demand and solemnly cancelled the curse once pronounced against the hero. By a masterstroke he won over even the sacerdotal heart, always the most stubborn, the most stupid, and therefore the most dangerous. It was Alcibiades who had profaned the Mysteries of Eleusis. It was Alcibiades who had sent the Spartan Agis to Decelea. For six melancholy years the sacred procession to Eleusis, shrine of the Mysteries, had not risked the passage of the Via

Sacra. With maimed and hurried rites it had journeyed there and back by sea. But he who wounds can best heal the wound. Once again the procession marched by land and returned in safety, guarded by Alcibiades and his military precautions. The Spartan lion lurked sulkily in its lair and dared not spring.

Then the people elected Alcibiades general with supreme power. They gave him an authority bestowed on one man only in earlier years, and that man was Pericles. At head of a new fleet of 100 ships Alcibiades sailed away in late October, never to see his city again.{673}

Extravagant hopes waited on his departure. Chios and all Ionia must surely be taken at a blow. The people had given him command. They had given him a fleet, 1500 hoplites, 150 cavalry. They had *not* given him the wherewithal to pay the men of his command. Cleophon had seen to this. "The juryman gulps all that money down."{674}

During Alcibiades' stay at Athens, the whole condition of affairs at the theatre of war in the east had suffered a grave change. An impetuous young prince, the great king's own son, Cyrus, had come to Sardis and taken over the Persian command from the vacillating Tissaphernes. And as the new Spartan admiral there had reached Ephesus one who, trained in the hard school of poverty, was a soldier to the finger-tips. Between this Lysander, a man in the very vigour of his age, and Prince Cyrus there sprang up the warmest of affections. The whole of the prince's wealth was placed unreservedly at the Spartan's service. A new Spartan fleet sprang into being, almost as it might seem at the waving of an enchanter's wand. On its crews high pay and ample food were lavished.{675} Challenge for the supremacy of the seas became once again a possibility. The work of Cyzicus must once again be done.

In the early spring of 407 B.C. Alcibiades moved his fleet to Notium.{676} Six miles away along the coast Lysander lay snugly ensconced in the harbour of Ephesus with a fleet of 90 ships. In vain the Athenian offered him battle. Lysander was too wise to be enticed out to fight. What he could best do he did, and many a hireling in Alcibiades' fleet deserted on the promise of higher and regular pay and ample food. The Athenian admiral was in sore straits for the money wherewith to pay even his lower wage. Money he *must* have. Only by plunder along the coast could he obtain supplies, unless friendly cities (if any such remained) made voluntary or enforced contributions. This was work of a nature requiring his own presence. It could not be entrusted to a subordinate. Alcibiades was compelled to divide his fleet. Part of it he left at Notium to keep careful watch over Lysander's movements. With the rest he himself sailed north on his quest for supplies in the first instance, and also to meet with Thrasybulus at Phocaea to

concert with this general plans for the future.

In this, Alcibiades made only one blunder, but it was an unfortunate one. He left the ships at Notium in a perfectly safe situation, but he entrusted the command in his absence to a man who seized the opportunity for the most wilful disobedience to orders. Antiochus the pilot, whom he selected, had long been known to him. Popular gossip ascribed their friendship and therefore this appointment to an incident long ago at Athens, when the then youthful Alcibiades let a pet quail escape from under his cloak as he scattered money broadcast in the crowd, and Antiochus had been the lucky man who captured the scared bird and restored it to the sorrowing owner.{677} In actual fact, this Antiochus was known to his admiral as a skilful seaman as well as a bluff hearty mariner who loved his glass and his joke. Alcibiades had no colleague of higher rank with him at Notium. He laid the most positive orders on Antiochus to offer no provocation to Lysander during his own absence. In that absence Antiochus with a couple of ships came sailing by the harbour mouth at Ephesus insulting Lysander by gesture as grossly as he could devise. Van Tromp's broom at the masthead was warranted by one lucky Dutch victory.{678} Antiochus' folly had no such recent justification. The Spartan rushed out upon the rash braggart. Ships hurried up on both sides and the issue of a scrambling fight was a Spartan victory. Antiochus managed to lose, one account says 15, another 22 ships, and retired with the survivors to Samos. Lysander erected a trophy of triumph at Notium.

On tidings of this contretemps Alcibiades came hurrying back. He found Lysander safe as usual at Ephesus. Again the Athenian offered battle. Again the Spartan refused it. The defeat had not deprived Alcibiades of his admitted superiority at sea.

But the news of the reverse sped home, and the admiral's many enemies, plucking up heart, denounced his carelessness. Then came other news. Alcibiades had withdrawn again to Samos and thence had sailed to plunder the land of the men of Cyme. Men at home were rather puzzled about Cyme. Was it still a friendly city of the Empire? Those who held this view accused Alcibiades hotly of estranging a faithful and unoffending subject. Those who knew the fact, namely that Cyme had recently rebelled against Athens, asked bitterly why he had failed to take and sack the miserable little town. Had the king bribed him? Alcibiades had no apologists to rebut this dilemma. No man urged on his behalf that they themselves should have supplied him adequately. All were ready to sympathise with his grumbling sailors. All were disappointed with the course of the campaign:

"They grew impatient", Plutarch truly says; "they never took into account the smallness of his supplies, that he was bound to go in search of money and provisions for his men."

A man with a bitter lying tongue reached Athens from the fleet, railing at his general for drunkenness, debauchery, with a thousand and one scandalous tales of deep drinking, boon companions, ribaldry, courtesans, bribery—Heaven knows what besides.

So the Athenian people came to their last and their most fatal decision. They deprived Alcibiades of his command, sending out Conon to take his place. And, the time for the spring elections being at hand, they elected a board of ten generals, the majority of whom were his political enemies. Neither Theramenes nor Thrasybulus nor, of course, he himself, was elected to the Board. The ten were Conon, Diomedon, Leon, Pericles (the great statesman's son), Erasinides, Aristocrates, Archestratus, Protomachus, Aristogenes, and Thrasylus. They were re-elected next year as well.

Conon arrived and took over the command. Alcibiades knew better than to go back home. He retired for safety to a castle of his own in Thrace named Pactyes, near Bisanthe on the northern coast of the Sea of Marmora.

Now, upon this, the last opportunity, Grote discharges his most Olympian lightnings upon the head of Alcibiades, always the particular object of his aversion, and sympathetically excuses the action by his cherished Athenian democracy which older writers found occasion to deplore. Never does the English historian surpass the magnificence of this his stately invective:{679}

"The disgraceful plunder of Kyme....He (Alcibiades) had no character to fall back upon; or rather he had a character worse than none, such as to render the most criminal imputations of treason not intrinsically improbable....He had had his trial; he had been found wanting....Besides the absence of grand successes, he had farther been negligent and reckless in his primary duties—he had exposed the Athenian arms to defeat by his disgraceful selection of an unworthy lieutenant—he had violated the territory and property of an allied dependency, at a moment when Athens had a paramount interest in cultivating by every means the attachment of her remaining allies....His proceedings at Kyme...richly deserved judicial animadversion....(Yet) the Athenians simply voted that he should be dismissed from his command....After his visit (to Athens) the impulses of a character essentially dissolute and insolent broke loose from that restraint under which they had before been partially controlled."

No German can rise to these heights. Grote still is indispensable.

The Englishman's anger that Alcibiades escaped actual trial and, of course, execution, recalls the disappointment of the mild and virtuous Polybius when once this historian

sacrificed his much self-advertised impartiality to his political enthusiasms. Aristomachus, tyrant of Argos, had delivered up his city to the young hero king of Sparta, Cleomenes the Third, then at war with the Achaean League. In earlier peaceful days the tyrant had been President of the League. Presently the clever old Aratus, Polybius' own much-respected leader, managed to lay hands on Aristomachus. "He should have been haled round the Peloponnese and tortured in every city", the furious Polybius writes. Instead of which, he was just "quietly drowned" at Cenchreae by Aratus' merciful orders.

Alcibiades deserved neither "judicial animadversion" nor dismissal. Grote, blinded by his dislike, has for once neglected the clear evidence from Thucydides that Cyme had revolted.{680} He has swallowed tainted evidence, that of Ephorus of Cyme, whose local patriotism has turned his rebel city into the outraged victim of Alcibiades' plundering.{681} In very fact, the admiral in want of supplies justly selected Cyme as the object of his raid. As for Antiochus, the man was, as has been said, a good seaman on Plutarch's express evidence, and, if a subordinate flatly disobeys orders, it is usually the subordinate whose further employment is out of the question.

But Alcibiades' political enemies at home were too numerous and too bitter. Party spirit was cause of Athens' downfall—so runs Thucydides' own considered judgment. The last dismissal of the one great captain left to Athens was the triumph of that spirit. She goes quickly enough now towards her doom:

> "Too late", writes Plutarch, "the Athenians acknowledged their blindness and their errors, and looked upon their second anger against Alcibiades as the greatest of these errors. For he had been cast off for no wrong-doing of his. In wrath against a subordinate for losing a few ships disgracefully, still more disgracefully they themselves had robbed the city of their greatest and most war-like general."{682}
>
> "At a time when the greatest perils befell the city",

said a later orator at Athens, speaking of the Ionian War,

> "never once did the enemy set up a trophy over you when Alcibiades was in command."{683}

At end of the play, no doubt, "Pardon's the word for all." When the whole long-tragedy of Alcibiades and his city is ended and the curtain falls, which of the two has the greater need for forgiveness at the judgment seat of history?

### *§ 2. The campaign and battle of Arginusae*{684}

Conon, taking over the command from Alcibiades at Samos, promptly reorganised the fleet, weeding out the unruly and insubordinate of the sailors, and reducing its numbers to 70 vessels, on whose crews and efficiency he hoped to be able to rely. He then devoted his energies to somewhat ineffective raiding up and down the Ionian coast. Lysander for his part did nothing to prevent this, contenting himself with the capture of Teos in Conon's absence. The year 407 B.C. came quietly to its end.

The new year saw a change of admirals on the Spartan side, as was required by their law. Yet Lysander might have been continued in a real command under a titular chief (a method followed later) had he not incurred the dislike of the then king of Sparta, Pausanias, who had succeeded his father Pleistoanax in 408 B.C. Pausanias secured the appointment as admiral, in Lysander's place, of one Callicratidas, a younger man and a brave and able Spartan. To Lysander's disgust and Prince Cyrus' chagrin, Callicratidas arrived at Ephesus in the spring of 406 B.C. and assumed the command.

The new admiral is selected by Grote for hero-worship. The English writer's praise of him is fervent and perhaps a trifle exaggerated, as the German Busolt says.{685} He was undoubtedly a man of noble sentiment, filled with a passion of anger against the dalliance with Persia, and inspired with a generous feeling of Panhellenic sympathy. He came out to fight and to finish the wasting fratricidal war. To him it was the height of ignominy that Hellenes should hang about a Persian grandee's vestibule, cap in hand, seeking for the doles to enable them to destroy their brethren. And in the moment of victory he, like others, even an Astyochus and a Strombichides in practice before him (a fact not noticed by Grote) and philosophers and kings after him,{686} stoutly declared that Greek should not enslave Greek. When, later in the year, he took Methymna on Lesbos and his allies demanded the sale of the prisoners, Callicratidas peremptorily refused.

> "No one", exults Grote, "who has not familiarised himself with the details of Grecian warfare can feel the full grandeur and sublimity of his proceeding—which stands, so far as I know, unparalleled in Grecian history. It is not merely that the prisoners were spared and set free: as to that point, analogous cases may be found, though not very frequent. It is that this particular act of generosity was performed in the name and for the recommendation of Panhellenic brotherhood and Panhellenic independence of the foreigner."

Such "Quixotism" was unlikely to be popular either with his allies, with his men, with Lysander, or with the ephors at home. Conon might not copy it. "It is dangerous to play with coals of fire".{687}

"Reciprocity of dealing is absolutely essential to constant moral observance....But some one must begin by setting such examples, and the man who does begin—having a position which gives reasonable chance that others will follow—is the hero....In his career, so sadly and prematurely closed, there was at least this circumstance to be envied, that the capture of Methymna afforded him the opportunity, which he greedily seized as if he had known that it would be the last, of putting in act and evidence the full aspirations of his magnanimous soul."{688}

Grote's enthusiasm is infectious. It has also led him to state that Callicratidas set "all" his prisoners of Methymna free, whereas in fact he released the citizen captives but sold "the Athenian garrison." It must be supposed, with the charitable Busolt, that this garrison "must therefore have consisted of non-Hellenic mercenaries".{689}

Such a man on his arrival was confronted with a mass of difficulties. Lysander handed over the command at Ephesus with an empty vaunt, properly rebuked by his successor. "As lord of the seas and victor in battle I give you the ships," Lysander boasted.

"Sail then from Ephesus, keep Samos on your left hand, and give me the ships at Miletus," replied the other. "Then I will admit your 'lord of the seas'."

Between Ephesus and Miletus there lay the Athenian fleet at Samos, only to be shirked by a long *détour* on a course outside this island.

Lysander, refusing to return to Sparta, remained sulking in the district, and Lysander's influence was paramount in every city, thanks to the oligarchic "clubs" of his adherents which he had called into being in them. Prince Cyrus flouted and insulted Callicratidas, and refused him money. Lysander co-operated to starve the fleet, ostentatiously sending back to Cyrus the large unspent funds which he had been given by the Prince. But Callicratidas faced all difficulties, and by the sheer force of his personality turned unconcealed hostility into unwilling admiration. Thanks to his vigour, his eloquence, and his military successes the stream of contributions alike from Greek ally and from Persian began, first to trickle, then to flow amply once again. He increased the number of his ships step by step until at last there lay in Miletus harbour, to which port he had removed from Ephesus, the enormous squadron of 170 triremes. Then he sent to Conon at Samos one of the pithy sayings characteristic of the man: "He would stop Conon's adultery with the sea."{690}

At the end of May Callicratidas sailed from Miletus with his whole fleet for Lesbos. Putting in at Chios on the way, to get money for his men, he arrived at Methymna on the north coast of Lesbos and took the town by storm. Conon, who had but his 70 ships, came behind him from Samos, dogging his enemy cautiously. As the Athenian lay in the channel between Lesbos and

the mainland off Hecatonnesi, “The hundred islands”, he saw Callicratidas’ whole fleet bearing down upon him from the north. Escape to distant Samos was impossible. Conon made at top speed for the shelter of Mitylene harbour. At the very harbour mouth he was caught, brought to battle, and lost 30 ships. The other 40 were pulled up on shore under the city wall and saved. Then Callicratidas blockaded Conon in Mitylene both by sea and land. The city was not provisioned for a siege.

Conon’s colleague, Diomedon, rushed wildly to the rescue from Samos with a dozen ships. Callicratidas snapped them up as they approached Mitylene by the southern channel. Diomedon made good his own escape, but left behind him ten more ships to be added to the Spartan’s list of prizes.

Meanwhile in Athens the long hot summer days were passing lazily by. There was no news from the fleet. The triumphant Democratic faction in the city had no qualms of conscience nor any anxiety for the future. The generals of the preceding year had been lately re-elected. Then there came staggering into Peiraeus harbour a solitary vessel, with Erasinides, one of their generals, aboard. At time of the mid-day meal, when the enemy were thinking of other things, Conon in Mitylene had sent out two blockade-runners. One none the less was taken. Erasinides made good his escape and brought to Athens the news of Conon’s desperate plight.

The city bestirred itself in earnest.

Within thirty days a fleet of 110 ships, many of them old and past all reasonable service, was launched, and splendidly equipped. Officers, marines, pilots, oarsmen, amounted to a total of 20,000 men. There were not citizens enough. Aliens and slaves in numbers were set on shipboard, the latter promised freedom on end of the campaign. This promise was redeemed. For money the temples were stripped of all their treasures. Gold and silver statues were melted into coin. This was Athens’ first gold coinage.[{691}] Of the ten generals, Conon and Leon were in Mitylene and Archestratus had been killed.[{692}] The rest, with a new general, Lysias (who replaced Archestratus), eight in all, took the fleet out. Theramenes and Thrasybulus, men of tried naval skill and hitherto so often generals, now out of favour with the victorious rival party, sailed as mere captains, “trierarchs” each of a single ship. There were left in Athens a handful of cavalry, some greybeards and youngsters to guard the walls, civil magistrates, councillors, priests, women and children. The entire manhood of the city answered to the call. Conon must be saved.

The fleet reached Samos. Here some 40 to 50 allied ships were added to their number. Still they were outnumbered by the enemy, many of whose ships had been newly built at Rhodes, Chios, and elsewhere. Then Callicratidas made his one fatal error. Unwilling to let Conon out from Mitylene harbour, even for a short while, possibly also thinking it wisest not to be caught between two fires (yet Conon's 40 were unlikely to pursue or, if so, to reach the scene in time), as soon as he heard news of the approach of the relieving ships, the Spartan divided his great fleet. He left 50 ships with Eteonicus, his second in command, to carry on the blockade of Mitylene. He himself with 120 sailed south to Malea promontory, expecting the approach of the eight Athenian admirals with their 150 ships (or more), and resolute to intercept them.

It was the evening of an August day when Callicratidas put in to Malea. Eight miles away across the water the flare of many lights presently shone through the dark. The Athenians had already arrived and were in moorings at three small islands off the mainland, called Arginusae Islands. Quietly, near midnight, the Spartan gave orders to his men to embark. He would try a night surprise A violent thunder-storm broke over their heads, and the orders were of necessity cancelled.

The next morning dawned on a lumpy sea and a strong wind blowing down from the north. The Athenians at Arginusae saw the whole enemy line bearing down upon them. They were not caught unawares, but put out to meet the attack in good order, their left wing leading. The Peloponnesian fleet came on in single line, covering a front perhaps of some eight miles. The Athenian outnumbered the enemy by some 35 or 40 ships. Never had two such large Hellenic fleets clashed together in battle. Nearly 280 ships and 50,000 men engaged in this the most desperate and stubborn of all the naval engagements of the great war.

The tale is told that at sight of the great numbers of the enemy Callicratidas' own pilot, a Megarian named Hermon, urged him to retire and not join battle. "Sparta", the admiral replied, "will be ordered none the worse for my death. To flee is the disgrace." The Roman Cicero moralises coldly over this incident:

> "Many", he writes, "have been found ready to sacrifice not only their wealth but also their lives to their country, men who would not endure the loss of even one morsel of their glory, no, not though the State's welfare required it. Such a man was Callicratidas."{693}

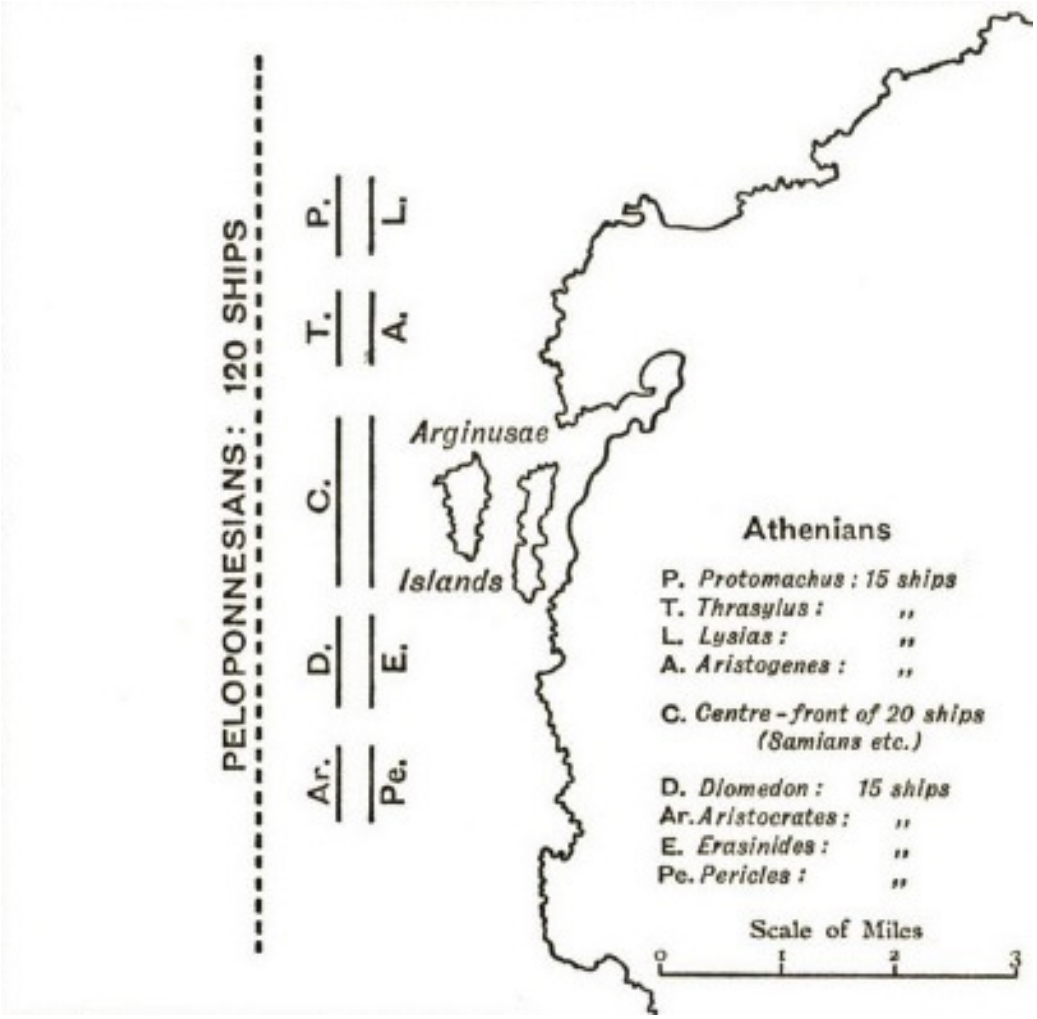
The eight Athenian admirals chose a battle formation of a novel, indeed a unique kind. They met the attack in a double line of ships. Each wing consisted of four squadrons of 15 Athenian

ships apiece, each under an admiral, arranged in double line, two squadrons in line in the front, two behind them as supports. There were thus 60 ships on either wing. The centre was more weakly held by the remaining ships, Samians, allies, and Athenians, also arranged in two lines, with a front line of 20 ships. The whole Athenian front therefore numbered 80 vessels as against the enemy's single line of 120. It might therefore seem that Callicratidas overlapped the Athenians by a mile on both wings. This view has been recently held. There is, however, no hint in the ancient accounts that the Peloponnesians actually attacked the flank of the Athenian line either on north or south. The English Admiral in his story of the battle accounts for this quite simply:

> "The allied overlap was nearly two miles", he writes, "which means that upwards of thirty of their ships delivered their charge 'in the air' and were for a certain time not in the fight. That interval was probably not short, since ordinary men under such circumstances usually wait for orders."

And he is reminded of the Franco-Spanish van at Trafalgar, and of the French ships to leeward at the Battle of the Nile.

Both Xenophon and Diodorus give us a version of this fight. The former's brief tale carries the greater weight. Xenophon makes no mention of an overlap at all. Diodorus explains that the Athenians included the islands in their battle front (hence there was no overlap)! His long verbose account, derived from Ephorus, is rightly dismissed as a "rhetorically-dressed, generally worthless, imaginative effort".{694} It is an attractive suggestion that there was no overlap because the Athenian front line was strung out at a greater distance from ship to ship than obtained in the opposite line, inasmuch as the ships of the second line were stationed, not each behind its "front rank man" (as in English army drill) but behind the gaps between the vessels of their front line. For the whole reason for the double line had been the Athenian admirals' dread lest the enemy should use their better ships and superior speed (how great a change from Phormio's day!) to break their line and so ram them from behind. The double line was devised to prevent this. It best prevented this if the rear rank ships guarded the gaps between the front rank ships. Such a formation, however, might well space the ships of both lines out more widely than had there been but a single line required to present an unbroken front to an attacking enemy.




In this order the two fleets joined battle. It seems that the great strength on both Athenian wings was meant for offensive action and not defensively, and that their weaker centre was slightly withheld.

“The tactical skill of the Athenians in the battle was of a high order,” writes the English admiral admiringly.{695}

At least the Athenian centre lost not a single ship in all the prolonged fighting. Presently, as was natural, order and cohesion went by the board, and little groups of ships clustered together engaged in furious battle. Of tactical manœuvring there was henceforth none on either side. Then after some hours’ conflict the Athenian right wing began to drive the opposing left wing back. At this crisis Callicratidas, who with his small purely Spartan contingent of 10 ships had posted himself on his right wing, standing in the prow of his flagship, when this crashed into an enemy, was hurled overboard. So he met his end. His whole fleet broke up and fled, some to Chios, the most to Phocaea.

Losses were heavy. The Athenians lost 25 ships, of which 13 had gone at once to the bottom, and 12 lay disabled wrecks, tossing in the waves, slowly sinking. There were 2000 men aboard them. The enemy lost more than 70, three-fifths of their entire fleet. As an instrument of war, the Peloponnesian navy for the time being had ceased to exist.

The victory and the death of the enemy admiral, Grote laments, “were signal misfortunes to Athens herself”. Had Callicratidas survived and won the day, Athens must have sued for peace, and the noble Spartan would have dictated tolerable, nay generous terms. Panhellenic sentiment must have triumphed, and all “the better feelings of the Grecian mind” have received their stimulus. But the control was to pass into the hands of the “worthless, but able, Lysander” again:

> “The defeat and death of Kallikratidas was thus even more deplorable as a loss to Athens and Greece than to Sparta herself. To his lofty character and patriotism, even in so short a career, we vainly seek a parallel.”{696}

Hardly otherwise was it a “signal misfortune” to victors as well as to vanquished when, in the very hour of final triumph, Abraham Lincoln fell to the assassin’s bullet and an Andrew Johnson took his place to dictate the settlement to the heroic prostrate Southern States.

When the enemy fleet broke up and fled, the eight admirals withdrew to Arginusae Islands and held a hurried Council of War. There was the enemy squadron blocking Mitylene, in ignorance surely of the issue of the battle. One urged that the whole fleet should make its way north to catch and destroy it unawares. Another pointed out seawards, over the grey tossing waves. There were drowning men, their own men, he urged, awaiting rescue. This was the primary duty of the fleet. Thrasybulus interposed. Surely there were ships enough for both tasks, he argued. So it was decided. The two subordinates, Theramenes and Thrasybulus, were given 47 ships and bidden go rescue the drowning on the dozen wrecks. With the rest, the bulk of the fleet, the eight admirals would shortly proceed to Mitylene. Meanwhile a rest was what they needed. The wind blew steadily. The two captains reported their task impossible. The admirals agreed. The wrecks sank. Next day it would be time enough to sail for Mitylene. The whole fleet took its ease.

There were men on the other side who recked little enough of the gale when their comrades’ safety was at stake. That same afternoon a small cutter fought its way to Eteonicus against the northerly wind with the news of Callicratidas’ defeat. The Spartan listened quietly. There was time to trick Conon yet and make good his own escape. At Eteonicus’ bidding the cutter stole

away southwards unseen from the shore. A little later, Conon on land heard that a boat was reaching the enemy at the harbour mouth. Its crew were crowned with garlands. Shouts of triumph floated across the water. “Callicratidas has conquered in the sea-fight. Every Athenian ship is sunk.” Eteonicus was seen making his sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Gods. The hours sped on. The mariners of the blockading squadron took their evening meal. Quietly the traders with the fleet obeyed orders and stowed all their goods aboard the attendant transport vessels. As dusk fell, every ship slipped its cable and ran before the gale close under shore round Malea. So they all came safe back to Chios. The Spartan Eteonicus himself was with the troops on land. Flames burst out through the darkness. He had set the camp of the beleaguerers on fire, and marched every man of them unmolested back to Methymna.

The astonished Conon woke to find the enemy gone. When the wind dropped, he launched his 40 ships and put to sea. At sea he met the baffled Athenian squadron from Arginusae and told his tale. Together they all returned to Mitylene. Then all sailed back to Samos again, vainly demonstrating against Chios on the way. And there the victor admirals sent their despatches home.

### *§ 3. The condemnation of the generals*[{697}]

Athens was in a ferment. There had been a great victory. But what a fearsome loss of life! Ugly rumours spread, of men drowning before their comrades’ very eyes. The public despatches and private letters from the generals confirmed the story. “Not that any one was in the least to blame,” the kindly generals wrote. “The storm had prevented the task of rescue with which, it so happened, the trierarchs, among them Theramenes and Thrasybulus, had actually been entrusted.” Perhaps this was the fact, men muttered, but at least the people would hear the story by word of mouth. Let all eight generals at once come home! For the purpose they were relieved of their command, and two others, Adeimantus and Philocles, were sent out to join Conon in their place.

Six obeyed the imperative summons. Two, distrustful and sagacious, disobeyed. Aristogenes and Protomachus had not made their colleagues’ task of exculpation the easier by their disobedience. If it were conscience made cowards of the two—had the six clear consciences?

The ship arrived at Athens. Erasinides was arrested at once on a charge of peculation. The five made their report to the Council “concerning the sea-fight and the fury of the storm”. The

Council ordered their arrest as well.

Theramenes of all men stood forward in the full Assembly of the people. The generals must give account, he cried. They did not rescue the shipwrecked!

The generals under arrest told their story to the people. They brought forward pilots and many others of the fleet to bear witness to the violence of the storm. Theirs seemed a quite convincing defence. No one was to blame. A simple vote of the people, and they would be released. But by this time it was late and too dark to count hands in the vote. The matter was adjourned to the next Assembly.

On a sudden the story takes a grim turn.

Next day there befell the festival of the Apaturia, the Athenian annual commemoration of the family, which lasted three October days. Every day of the three days the streets were full of men clad in black garments and with shaven heads. Athens rang with mourning and lamentation. Were there not fathers and kinsmen enough already of the thousands slain or drowned at Arginusae that Theramenes, of all men, must provide many mock mourners to add hypocritically to the excitement and the woe? Men told this tale against him. It passes all reasonable belief.{698}

Men's indignation waxed ever hotter, whether Theramenes fanned the flames or no. After the festival the adjourned Assembly met. A certain Callixenus had carried in Council a proposal now laid before the people, to decide the accusation against the generals *en bloc* by a single vote. "Have the generals done hurt by failing to rescue the victors in the sea-fight—aye or no?" Penalty on conviction—death! A sailor sprang up in the middle of the seething crowd. He had floated to safety, he shouted, on a meal barrel. His drowning comrades had cried to him to tell the people—let him come alive to shore—that the generals did not rescue those heroes who had served their country.{699}

Euryptolemus and others sought to intervene. They laid formal indictment against Callixenus for illegality. His proposal was dead against the law, they urged, which gave every man right to a trial individually.{700}

This was the fact. A huge shout arose.

"Shall any man prevent the people doing what it pleases? Shame, shame upon him!"

"Put these objectors with the generals and vote upon the lot," howled the mob.

Pale and scared, the legalists withdrew their indictment. The presidents of the Assembly, special officials, were divided in their mind. Some declared they would refuse to allow Callixenus' motion to be put to the vote. He sprang up.

"I denounce these too," he cried. The people applauded.

"Prosecute them, prosecute them," they yelled.

The presidents bowed before the storm, all save one man alone. By chance of the lot there was among the presidents, probably indeed the chief of them, a certain Socrates that day. Stoutly, against all vociferations and threats, the old philosopher refused to allow the question. His protest was disregarded. His colleagues put the question in Callixenus' form.

Having gained their point, the people quieted down and allowed the generals' advocate, Euryptolemus, to make a long impassioned oration on their behalf. Once again he urged the legal right of each man to a separate trial. On the main question he demanded the acquittal of all. For a moment the people wavered. A majority voted for the procedure of the separate trial. An objection was at once raised to the vote on some obscure point of law. A second vote was taken. This time Callixenus won the day. One single vote should decide on all the accused together. The vote was taken. The eight generals were condemned. The six then in the people's grasp were put to death at once.

Modern Greece executes its unsuccessful generals, following many an ancient precedent. Ancient Athens enjoys the doubtful distinction of being the only free state to put its victorious generals to death.

This, told briefly, is the famous story of "the condemnation of the generals after Arginusae". To its consideration Grote devotes no fewer than thirty pages.[{701}] In these the great advocate pleads almost passionately on behalf of the Athenian people, striving in a masterpiece of argument to palliate the offence of their illegal action—which cannot be denied—urging in excuse the reasonableness of their wild excitement and bitter agitation. And in the background, both of the story and of the argument, there moves darkly one sinister figure—that of Theramenes.

Just two questions arise, the first, the justice of the condemnation, the second, the motive of Theramenes.

The first turns on a question of fact. Was the storm too furious to allow the rescue? If this

were in fact the case, then no one was to blame. If it were *not* the case, then a mist of doubt begins to cloud the story of the orders given the trierarchs. What of the ultimate responsibility of the higher command? Were the orders given at all? Were they given too late? Was it not so urgent a matter that the generals ought to have seen to it themselves, and with every available vessel? Did they not shirk a grave responsibility and, when disaster therefore befell, look round for scapegoats? Good-naturedly enough they would try to do their best for the scapegoats of their choice. But if the people *must* have victims, they themselves would shift the blame to others. Was it any wonder that the others retaliated so fiercely?

For a moment the "previous question" entices us back to it. Was the storm too furious to allow the rescue? There is the most surprising unanimity in the answer "yes" given in the ancient record to this question. It is made by all the Athenian actors in the drama. It is corroborated by those who wrote the story of it. The violence of the gale is maintained by the generals themselves,{702} by their witnesses,{703} by their counsel Euryptolemus,{704} by their accuser Theramenes.{705} It is credited by both Xenophon{706} and Diodorus.{707} No one in the whole ancient record denies it. Only—be it remembered—the Athenian people themselves, by their vote, showed that they rejected the excuse. It is true that they too soon afterwards repented, arresting Callixenus and four of his associates on the charge of "deceiving the people". In due course of time Callixenus came to a miserable end. "Abhorred by all, he perished of starvation."{708}

Yet an uncomfortable suspicion remains about this gale. It has been fully and admirably voiced by Grote.{709} Leaving aside his eloquent appeal to "the habits and feelings of the English Navy" when drowning comrades are in question—

> "It must have been a frightful storm indeed which would force an English admiral even to go back to his moorings leaving these men so exposed"—

there is real reason for wonder how the wind and waves off Arginusae can have been so terrifying when, but a bare 14 miles away, a little cutter can run merrily to and fro, and when what Xenophon calls "a fair wind"{710} that same evening carries every kind of vessel under Eteonicus' command comfortably to Chios near to the very scene of the battle which had ended but a few hours earlier. Does not Diodorus give the real reason for the drowning of the shipwrecked, when to the storm he adds the remark that their comrades "were tired and did not want to do rescue work"?{711} Assent must be given to Grote's conclusion:

"The storm was not such as would have deterred any Grecian seaman animated by an earnest and courageous sense of duty."

And it seems that the repentance of the people was rather for the illegality than for the supposed injustice of the final sentence. It was Theramenes who had sedulously and openly inflamed their wrath and indignation. But neither by accusation nor by arrest was Theramenes involved in the punishment inflicted on Callixenus and his associates.

What then was Theramenes' motive? It seems agreed that all concerned might at one point have escaped scot free, had it not been for his insistence. Doubtless he, with Thrasybulus and the other trierarchs, was uncomfortably involved in the fate of the drowned, and the generals were responsible for dragging their names so prominently forward. He accused them to save his own life, said his enemy Critias bluntly a few years later,{712} and this is the only mention of his motive in all the ancient record. Fear, therefore, and the desire to retaliate must have spurred him on. But Thrasybulus and the others were equally involved. Why have they disappeared so unaccountably from the story? Why was Theramenes the only man who, when the dog was dozing off to sleep again, rudely kicked it up into wakeful fury?

A few months later, Aristophanes put on the stage the most amusing of his comedies, the *Frogs*. In it the poet makes two famous mentions of Theramenes. In the first, the Chorus sings:

"This is the part of a dexterous clever
Man with his wits about him ever,
One who has travelled the world to see;
Always to shift, and to keep through all
Close to the sunny side of the wall;
Not like a pictured block to be,
Standing always in one position;
Nay, but to veer, with expedition,
And ever to catch the favouring breeze,
This is the part of a shrewd tactician,

This is to be a Theramenes."{713}

In the second, the poet Euripides is gibing at old-fashioned Aeschylus:

"Look at his pupils, look at mine: and there the contrast view.
Uncouth Megaenetus is his, and rough Phormisius too;
Great long-beard-lance-and-trumpet-men, flesh-tearers with the pine:
But natty smart Theramenes, and Cleitophon are mine."

The God Dionysus interrupts him:

> "Theramenes? A clever man and wonderfully sly:
> Immerse him in a flood of ills, he'll soon be high and dry;
> 'A Kian with a kappa, sir, not Chian with a chi.'"{714}

That is, he can wriggle with acrobatic agility out of any "tight place". The Greek pun is a simple one, just a play on two words pronounced alike in the "Cockney" dialect of the streets, though doubtless distinguished carefully by precisians. Even as a Londoner reading aloud Stevenson's wonderful poem calls "whaup" "warp" (mispronouncing both words). "Is this your work, Theramenes?" "No, no! 'Twas another fellow of the same-sounding name."

> "See here—a cruel dirk! Who did the deed? A Scot, methinks.
> A Scot, nae doot, my Lord: but not A. Scott,
> Your very humble sairvant!{715}

Theramenes the "Kothornos", *i.e.* the Buskin (the actor's sandal which fitted, or misfitted, either foot), such was his nickname in the streets, said Critias, his bitter enemy, scornfully.{716} Theramenes the "Trimmer", such remains the nickname today of one whom Thucydides calls simply "a good speaker and a sagacious man",{717} of one who in revolutionary times pursued consistently a difficult Constitutional policy, the rule of the "moderate men", which is always liable to attack and overthrow from both sides,{718} a policy which wins praise from historian, philosopher, and poet alike.{719}

> "Of three ranks in the State, the midmost 'tis
> Preserveth her, guarding such order as the State
> Ordains."

Of this "Moderate Party" Alcibiades and Theramenes were the leaders. If the latter in 406 B.C. wriggled with ingenuity out of a grave personal peril, his persistency in accusing the generals was not due to his fear alone. There lay at the back of it a more important political motive—the recall of Alcibiades himself.

For this was in truth the one great political question of all these months, as it was Athens' last hope of victory. The dullard historians of the period fail to realise it. Once again it is Aristophanes who brings the truth into the clear light of day. In Athens' streets men went about arguing and wrangling concerning the fugitive in his lonely Thracian castle. Shall he even now be recalled, at the eleventh hour?

It was at the Lenaean Festival in the February of the year 405 B.C. that Aristophanes produced the *Frogs*, three months after the execution of the generals. In this comedy, the two poets in the Underworld, Aeschylus and Euripides, compete for their recall to life and to Athens. One last test, that of their political sagacity, is proposed to them by the judge, the God Dionysus. By their answer to one question they stand or fall. And the question of questions is: "What do you think of Alcibiades?"

"DIONYSUS. Now then, whichever of you two shall best
Advise the city, *he* shall come with me.
And first of Alcibiades, let each
Say what he thinks; the city travails sore.
EURIPIDES. What does she think herself about him?
DIONYSUS. She loves and hates and longs to have him back. But give me your advice about the man.
EURIPIDES. I loathe a townsman who is slow to aid,
And swift to hurt, his town; who ways and means
Finds for himself, but finds not for the State.
DIONYSUS. Poseidon, but that's smart! (*To* AESCHYLUS)
And what say you?
AESCHYLUS. 'Twere best to rear no lion in the State:
But having reared, 'tis best to humour him.
DIONYSUS. By Zeus the Saviour, still I can't decide.
One is so clever, and so clear the other.
But once again. Let each in turn declare
What plan of safety for the State ye've got.
EURIPIDES. I know and I can tell you.
DIONYSUS. Tell away.
EURIPIDES. When things, mistrusted now, shall trusted be, And trusted things mistrusted.
DIONYSUS. I don't quite comprehend. Be clear, and not so clever.
EURIPIDES. If we mistrust those citizens of ours
Whom now we trust, and those employ whom now
We don't employ, the city will be saved.
If on our present tack we fail, we surely
Shall find salvation in the opposite course.
DIONYSUS. Good, O Palamedes I Good, you genius you. Now, *you.*
AESCHYLUS. But tell me whom the city uses. The good and useful?
DIONYSUS. What are you dreaming of? She hates and loathes them.
AESCHYLUS. Does she love the bad?
DIONYSUS. Not love them, no: she uses them perforce.
AESCHYLUS. How can one save a city such as this?"

* * * * *

But, Aeschylus concludes, the citizens will be saved

> "When they shall count the enemy's soil their own,
> And theirs the enemy's: when they know that ships
> Are their true wealth, their so-called wealth delusion."{720}

"Athens' only wealth her ships": a true and sombre conclusion a few months before her last fleet was taken by the enemy.

Thus in the *Frogs,* Aristophanes' happiest Comedy, both poets hint broadly that it is best to recall Alcibiades, and "to change the Government". It cannot be doubted that this was the dramatist's own view. His attitude to Alcibiades throughout his career is an interesting study. There is no other Athenian politician whom he does not handle with the greatest frankness. Throughout all his many plays the poet shows a curious reserve when Alcibiades is his theme. And now at the very end there is this most cautious riddling in the *Frogs.* Aristophanes knew that the ground on which he was treading was most dangerous, that he was likely to find himself playing with fiery passions,

> "Periculosae plenum opus aleae
> Tractas et incedis per ignes
> Suppositos cineri doloso."

Wary he must be. But his play, to win the coveted prize, *must* be topical and up-to-date. "Shall Alcibiades be recalled?" This theme *must* bring the Comedy to its end.

It was to promote this recall that Theramenes had struck, on his friend's behalf, his deadly blow at the generals of Arginusae a few months earlier. These were the nominees of the democratic party which had expelled the great admiral and triumphed in his downfall. They were his political foes. Could they be but removed with disgrace from the stage, was it not empty for the return of the victim of their in-justice?

Theramenes on his own behalf, on Alcibiades' behalf, on his City's behalf, struck his deadliest and most fatal blow at the military chiefs of the rival party. He had won this the first round of the final political struggle in free Athens.

Adeimantus, one of his own party, friend, perhaps kinsman, of Alcibiades was now elected general.

Theramenes had won the second round.

He himself was elected general for 405 B.C. Final victory seemed within his grasp.

The opposite party rallied. Every newly elected general had to pass his "scrutiny" before the election was finally confirmed. Theramenes was rejected on his scrutiny.{721} The democratic party carried the elections. On the Board of ten Generals elected to carry on the war in 405 B.C. Adeimantus only was Alcibiades' adherent. Theramenes' final despairing effort had failed. Alcibiades, "the most excellent and valiant of all the generals," as Plutarch calls him, was not recalled.{722}

### *§ 4. The "battle" of Aegospotami and the fall of Athens*

Cleophon's position remained unbroken and his influence with the people supreme.

After the battle of Arginusae Sparta sent once more to Athens, offering the same terms of peace as she had proposed after the battle of Cyzicus. Cleophon came rolling drunk and wearing a breastplate into the Assembly, and the offer was with contumely rejected. The radical leaders at Athens were always optimists during the war. But on this occasion both the demagogue and the people were mad. Sparta had infinite resources behind her. Athens had none. Grote was driven to deny the truth of the tale of the peace embassy. It was a mere blunder, he urged, on part of a poor scholiast who, misreading a passage in a lost work by Aristotle, mixed up the battles of Cyzicus and Arginusae. Since Grote's death the lost work has been recovered. The tale stands fast, the demagogue condemned. No Grote reappears to champion a truly desperate cause.{723} "Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat."

Sparta bestirred herself with grim energy. Lysander must take command again. Prince Cyrus and the Greek cities in Asia sent begging for his appointment. The law of Sparta forbade it. One Aracus, recently an ephor, was appointed Admiral, with Lysander as his "secretary". Aracus knew his duty. His "secretary" was to have the undisputed handling of the ships. The radical people of Athens, in their frenzy, deride the law rather than obey it, and threaten its champions. The conservative government of Sparta, in its need, tricks the law rather than amend it. The former lose, the latter gain at once, by the same disregard for law. Reverence for law is a Roman virtue.

In the spring of 405 B.C. Lysander with 35 ships arrived at Ephesus, and there mustered his forces. From Chios Eteonicus brought to him a fleet of 100 ships. Prince Cyrus lavished gold upon him before going up to King Darius, then dying at Susa, in hopes of the succession. More ships came to Lysander from Rhodes and other cities, and many more were hastily built for him

at Antandrus. It was with an enormous fleet of 200 vessels and with a full war chest besides that at last he put out to sea. Twenty-eight Vice-Admirals, a pet soothsayer, and Callicratidas' own pilot Hermon sailed under his command.{724}

The Athenians meanwhile had not been idle. Adeimantus came home asking for reinforcements. They despatched back with him more generals to Conon at Samos with such further ships as they could collect. They further armed the generals with a new decree, that all prisoners taken after battle should at once have their right hands cut off. By its brutality Cleophon almost leaves his master Cleon in the lurch. Adeimantus had opposed the decree in vain. Grote cannot bring himself to credit the tale (which indeed has variants).{725} Yet Philocles (one of the new generals appointed upon the recall of the victors of Arginusae), who may have been the actual author of the decree, thought poorly of its mercy. Capturing a Corinthian and an Andrian ship, he had every living soul on board the two vessels hurled down from a rocky cliff to perish in the waves beneath. And Philocles was an Athenian. Truly the war in its last stages had "assumed the brutal character of an Annihilation-War", as the German puts it.{726}

The Athenians' fleet, 180 ships strong, sailed out from Samos, searching for Lysander. A decisive battle was imperatively in their interests, and at once. Reserve funds they had none. Lysander was not so anxious to fight. Prince Cyrus had implored him to be cautious, and to wait until he himself could bring up the Phoenician fleet to join the Spartan.

Sailing south to Rhodes, Lysander eluded the Athenians. These, splitting up into small squadrons, ranged plundering up and down the Ionian coast. Then Lysander on a sudden made a dash for the Hellespont, and reached Abydos harbour, meeting no enemy on the voyage. From Abydos he moved 18 miles upstream to Lampsacus, and took the town at once by storm. He enjoyed now all the resources of a rich city and of the countryside behind it to maintain him so long as he pleased. And the harbour mouth could be guarded securely against any possible attack.

Conon and his colleagues reassembled their 180 ships and followed in pursuit. From Chios they sailed to Elaeus, from Elaeus to Sestos, and then, in a fatal moment, from Sestos to the open beach of "Goat's River", Aegospotami, which was situated a bare two miles across the water from Lampsacus. Here there was neither village, nor food, nor shelter, nor security. Yet surely they could entice Lysander out to fight. With what other purpose could he have voyaged so far north, so far from any hope of reinforcement by the Phoenician fleet?

Four days passed by. Every morning at daybreak the Athenian ships bore down in line of battle upon Lampsacus. Every morning they saw the enemy's fleet in perfect order waiting for them motionless and ready. Every morning slowly crept on to noon. The Athenians dared not attack, prow to prow, the embattled Spartan line. Every morning the sailors clamoured for their mid-day meal, and the ships went back to their own shore. Every morning a few of Lysander's speediest ships followed them in observation. Every morning the crews landed for their meal, and went roaming the bare countryside for fuel and food, scattering the more widely in their quest as day followed day. Lysander's scouting ships returned to Lampsacus. The enemy had disembarked, they reported. Then, but not till then, the Spartan sent his crews ashore.

It was the afternoon of the fourth day when a solitary horseman came riding down from the hills into the Athenian camp on shore. It was Alcibiades, coming hot haste from his Thracian home. Ten years earlier he, victim of bitter injustice, like Coriolanus, his great Roman counterpart, had cried:

> "I will fight
> Against my cankered country with the spleen
> Of all the under fiends."

Now he came to save her in her last and greatest peril, that of commanders careless, boastful, incompetent, face to face with a watchful, wary, and brilliant foe. Who knew Lysander so well as did Alcibiades, for so many a long month of late in command against him?

The Athenian generals gave him audience. "Let them withdraw again to Sestos," he implored them. "There they had a harbour and a city. Thence they could fight whenever they might please. He too would raise the natives of the countryside, the Thracian tribes and their chieftains, in their support. To let their seamen go roaming on the shore, with a Lysander across the strait two miles away—this was the extreme of peril."

Tydeus, one of the generals of Cleophon's choice, answered with a sneer. "Pray, are you general," he enquired, "or are we?" Alcibiades rode away.

The fifth day dawned.

Out sallied the Athenian ships once more as the sun rose, and hovered off Lampsacus' harbour mouth. The silent enemy line was ranged once more in disciplined order against them. Back for the fifth time to Goat's River the Athenians went, dogged by Lysander's following scouts. Ever more scornful of the cowardly foe, for the fifth time the sailors poured out of their

vessels to the land. Only Conon kept his own crew aboard and those of seven other vessels with him. And the crew of the famous “flagship”, the *Paralus,* also still stayed by their oars.

They saw Lysander’s scouts rowing homeward, as on all previous days. They did *not* see the flashing of a shield from these, when they had reached mid-channel.

At the signal, thousands of oars crashed in the quiet water. The whole of Lysander’s waiting line rushed forward as one ship upon their helpless prey. In vain Conon gave the call to instant action. In some of the Athenian vessels they had manned two banks of oars, in others one, but many were still empty when the foe fell upon them. Of fighting there was none. Conon and his tiny squadron escaped and fled far over the sundering seas to Cyprus in the distant south. Many a long year passed before he saw again his native country. The flagship sped back to Athens with the news. Athens’ last navy was destroyed.

> “In one single hour Lysander had brought the longest of wars to an end.”{727}

Some 20 Athenian ships in all escaped. The 160 were captured. A large number of sailors fled overland to Sestos and neighbouring towns. Those who were taken prisoners, as were all the generals except Conon, could expect small mercy from a Lysander. They found none. To the number of at least 3000, the Athenians among them were all put to death in cold blood at Lampsacus. Adeimantus only was spared, because he had opposed the recent barbarous decree of the Athenian people. With the natural instinct, whether of an Athenian or of a Parisian mob, to cry “nous sommes trahis”, his fellow-countrymen accused Adeimantus of betraying the fleet. The only treachery, as the story of the disaster very clearly shows, was the incompetence of all the generals alike. But Adeimantus was of the rival “Moderate” party, and Adeimantus alone had been given his life by Lysander. What better scapegoat could be found?{728}

Philocles died bravely enough. Lysander taunted him. What penalty, the Spartan asked him, could he assign himself who had given such counsel concerning Hellenes to his fellow-citizens?

> “Where there is no judge”, the Athenian retorted, “there is no accuser. Lysander was conqueror. Let him do as, had he been conquered, he would have been done by.” Philocles bathed and clad himself in a fair bright robe, and was the first to offer his throat to the executioner.{729}

Lysander had no need for haste. With all deliberation he sailed for the Peiraeus, capturing town after town on the way. Every city in the Empire was lost to Athens, save Samos only,

which clung desperately to her loyalty. Every garrison elsewhere was promised life and at once surrendered. The Athenians were ordered to return to Athens. The more crowded the city was, the more rapidly famine would do its work. Byzantium, Calchedon, Sestos, all the Thracian towns, Mitylene, submitted. In the late autumn Lysander's fleet sailed into the Saronic Gulf. The Athenian inhabitants of Aegina were expelled and the few Aeginetan refugees who had escaped their enemies' cruelty were restored to their homes.{730} Melos and Scione presently received the like recompense for their sufferings at Athens' hands. Two Spartan armies under the Kings Pausanias and Agis marched up to the walls of Athens and encamped in the Academy. Lysander straitly blockaded the Peiraeus. The city began to hunger.

Still for a while there was no thought of surrender.

Winter drew on. The Spartan armies returned home. The blockade by sea continued. Men died of famine in the streets daily. They sent to Agis (now back at Decelea) pleading to be admitted to alliance with Sparta.

"They would surrender the whole Empire if they might keep Peiraeus and their walls."

The matter was not for him to decide, the king replied. "Let them send envoys to Sparta." At Sellasia near the Laconian frontier the envoys were stopped.

"Go back"—so the ephors sent them word—"If you need peace, be more wisely counselled when you come again."

The envoys returned with news of the rebuff. Archestratus urged acceptance of the enemy's demand. He was thrown into prison. A decree of Cleophon's manufacture forbade any proposal about the walls.

Theramenes asked to be sent to Lysander. He would at least discover, so he urged, what Sparta's intentions really were. His citizens bade him go. It was early January when he left the stricken city. It was full April before he returned. Lysander had detained him all these months, he said, and had finally told him that only the ephors could answer his enquiries. Theramenes has been bitterly blamed for his long delay, a voluntary delay in fact. For, all the while, men were dying of starvation in his city. It can only be urged that he must be left to judge how long time was necessary to bring the people to their senses. When he left, Archestratus was in prison. When he returned, at last the people were prepared to bow to the inevitable. Meanwhile there was one less mouth to feed in Athens and—plenty to eat elsewhere for a

visitor on friendly terms with Lysander. Theramenes was not an Adrian Van der Werf, heroic burgomaster of Leyden.{731}

Theramenes on his return at once was sent, head of an embassy of ten, to Sparta. “They had come as plenipotentiaries,” so they sent word to the ephors. The latter therefore consented to give them audience. They carried back to Athens Sparta’s final terms, offered Athens in spite of Corinth’s and Thebes’ demand that the city should be utterly destroyed. The Long Walls and the Peiraeus fortifications were to be razed to the ground. All ships, save a dozen only, were to be surrendered. All exiles were to be restored. All foreign policy was to be of Sparta’s dictation. On these terms Athens might have peace.

The survivors of the raging famine thronged in anguish round Theramenes and his fellow-envoys when they re-entered the city. Had they brought back any terms? Next day the people heard their news. Theramenes urged submission. Some few opposed.

“Dare you deliver up to Spartans the walls built by Themistocles, defiant of Spartan wishes?” a fervid youngster cried.

“Boy”, the old statesman answered, “I do nought contrary to Themistocles. He raised these walls to save the citizens. We, to save them, shall cast them down.”{732}

All such opposition was shattered on the rock of fact. A vast majority voted for the acceptance of the terms.

> “After these things Lysander sailed into the Peiraeus, and the exiles returned, and men began with great eagerness to raze the walls to the sound of merry piping, thinking that that day was the beginning of liberty for Hellas.”{733}

It was the sixteenth day of the month Munychion, about the 25th of April, in the year 404 B.C., when Athens capitulated. The great war was ended. It had lasted 27 years.

## EPILOGUE

Samos presently fell to Lysander, and the islanders were expelled from their homes.

At Athens Sparta set up an Oligarchy of thirty men, who ruled the city with absolute powers for eight months and are known to history as “The Thirty Tyrants”. Secured by the presence in the city of a Spartan garrison, they indulged in spoliation and blood-lust to their hearts’ content. One of the Thirty quickly vanished from the scene. For Theramenes, through his friendship (of a sort) with Lysander, found himself a member of the Government, yoked with Critias, the most bloodthirsty of all ruffians (as a democrat turned tyrant was not unapt to be). Theramenes protested warmly against his colleagues’ outrages. Once again, as in 411 B.C., he came forward to advocate his favourite “Moderate” programme of a limited franchise. On this occasion the number of the privileged was to be 3000. Five thousand might seem too many. But in one respect at least conditions had changed. Spartans were now masters of the city and not foes lurking outside the impregnable walls.{734} Critias was not the man to suffer Antiphon’s fate. With great promptness he denounced Theramenes before the Athenian Council. In the debate the tide seemed running in Theramenes’ favour. Critias roughly intervened. At his gesture the police dragged his victim from the altar of refuge and haled him off for instant execution in prison. Theramenes drank the hemlock and jerked the last few drops of the poison from the beaker upon the dungeon floor, as a man who makes libations to the Gods.

“This to the gentle Critias,” he cried.{735}

So Theramenes died.

Cleophon had been an early victim of the Tyrants. That most short-sighted of popular leaders, but, like Lysander himself, at least an honest man, had been arrested and, with a travesty of the forms of law, executed before Athens capitulated. He did not live to see the final miseries which his folly had helped to inflict upon his city.

All of democratic tendencies who could escape fled terror-stricken over the borders, hurrying from the vengeance of the Oligarchs after Theramenes’ death. Many were caught and murdered. But there was one man far away overseas who kept the Thirty from peaceful slumbers so long as he remained alive. Alcibiades was living quietly in a small village of Phrygia, Melissa near Synnada, under the nominal protection of the Persian Pharnabazus. A secret message reached the satrap. It came from Lysander, but it was sent at Critias’ urging. Not until Critias had obtained a peremptory mandate from the Spartan ephors to Lysander to

forward the message did Alcibiades' old opponent reluctantly write as bidden. "Alcibiades must die. Would the Persian kindly arrange the affair?"

On a night, Alcibiades awoke from evil dreams to find the bedchamber in flames. Hastily he cast a heap of garments upon the fire and, wrapping his robe round the left arm to serve as buckler, rushed with drawn sword out to meet the assassins. The barbarians who were clustering round the door fled in terror to a distance. Then a storm of darts rained upon him, and Alcibiades fell dead. The pack of curs had pulled the lion down. He was barely forty-five years of age.{736}

Five centuries later, the Roman Hadrian set up a statue on his tomb and ordained annual sacrifices to his Shade.{737}

We may spare to repeat Grote's censorious strictures by way of epitaph upon the morals of the two men, Theramenes and Alcibiades, whom above all others the English Radical detests. They had worked together against desperate odds to save their city, and in death they could not long be divided. Each had served his country in her most bitter need. At the final Judgment of the Last Assize many doubtless may earn that praise. Without scruple we may add the two Athenians to that Roll of Honour.

The refugees from Athens fled over the frontier to the Megarid and Boeotia. There was a revulsion of feeling at Thebes when she saw her neighbour so prostrate and tormented. Defying Lysander's unavailing wrath, she gave hospitable welcome to Thrasybulus and other ardent democrats. The veteran general mustered seventy resolute adherents, and, the Garibaldi of Athens, crossing the mountains, seized the fort of Phyle in north Attica. An army, foot and horse, marched against him from the city, only to retreat discomfited by repulse and snowy weather. With forces now increased to 700 men Thrasybulus swooped down towards Peiraeus and entrenched himself at Munychia near the port. The enemy in a dense column fifty deep with a swarm of skirmishers flung out in front, more than five times his strength, advanced against him. He routed them. Among their dead lay Critias himself and one other of the Thirty. Thrasybulus was master of Peiraeus. The extremist leaders retired to Eleusis. Then Sparta intervened. Happily for the hero band, it was Pausanias, who was of kindly intent to Athens, and not Lysander, her implacable foe, who had the final handling of the matter. Still more happily for Thrasybulus, the King in a sharp engagement worsted the Athenian's little army handsomely. Satisfied on the score of honour, Pausanias was in a mood to be generous. By his influence at Sparta, the warring factions came to reconciliation and a peace. Thrasybulus

occupied Athens. The democracy was restored.{738} A general amnesty was proclaimed, and it was honourably observed. To the credit for this a certain Archinus has the greatest claim.{739} To the model of this amnesty the Roman Cicero made his appeal three and a half centuries later upon the morrow of Caesar's murder.{740} In 403 B.C., in the famous "archonship of Eukleides", Athens began to live once more. Ten years later Conon came back to Athens in triumph and built her walls again.

One by one, the generals and statesmen of the great war journey to their end. King Agis died of a sudden illness in 399 B.C. Lysander was trapped and slain in a skirmish outside the walls of Boeotian Haliartus in 395 B.C., when Sparta had rushed into war with her old ally Thebes. Few great soldiers with the credit for ending a long and bitter war have at their death been less lamented by historians and biographers. Humanity neither forgets nor forgives callous cruelty. King Pausanias, incurring unmerited censure for his enemy Lysander's death and now blamed bitterly for the measure of mercy which he had shown to Athens, fled for his life from Sparta in 395 B.C., and, many years later, died an exile in sanctuary at Tegea. Thrasybulus perished fighting at Aspendus in 390 B.C. Of the end of Adeimantus history tells us nothing. Last survivor of Alcibiades' friends and champions, he too passes into the dark.

Follow the gleam of Romance in Greek history. Kindled and burning brightly in the heroic struggle for liberty against the Oriental foe, it then for half a century illumined the Imperial Democracy of Athens and the people's leaders. Athens falls, and the gleam lights on her no more. The City, for all Demosthenes' fiery if mistaken eloquence, lies henceforward in perpetual shadow. *Stat magni nominis umbra.* For a few brief years the gleam hovers fitfully first over a great Spartan king, then over his greater Theban antagonist. Then it speeds north to Macedon and Alexander.

A century after Alexander's death the gleam shines out once more in the Peloponnese, with a pale wan light over the upstart city Megalopolis and her sons, redly over the last two young hero kings of Sparta, an Agis, a Cleomenes.

Roman armies cross the Adriatic. The Romance of History bids the Greeks of the homeland a long farewell.

## *NOTE TO CHAPTER XI—THE "MIDDLE PARTY" AND ITS LEADERS*

There are five historical puzzles in the period 411-405 B.C., viz:

(1) Alcibiades' attitude to the Oligarchic Revolution of 411 B.C., *i.e.* his encouragement first, then his rebuff, of the "oligarchs".

(2) The long delay before Alcibiades ventures to return to Athens in 408 B.C. and his hesitation and timidity as he approaches the City.

(3) The dismissal of Alcibiades after the trivial defeat of Antiochus at Notium in 407 B.C.

(4) The condemnation of the generals after Arginusae in 406 B.C. and the part played in the affair by Theramenes.

(5) The suspicion against Adeimantus of treachery at Aegospotami in 405 B.C.

My theory, which I have developed and used constantly in my narrative, is that all five puzzles may be solved by the struggle of political parties among themselves at Athens, and in particular by the real existence during these years of a "Middle" or a "Moderate" Party whose leaders were Theramenes, its political, and Alcibiades, its military head. I hold that these two men not only were linked together by common political sympathy and interest but also actually worked hand in hand together throughout. Other members of the party were Adeimantus, Aristocrates, and—with somewhat broader democratic sympathies—Thrasybulus. Cleophon was furiously hostile to the Party—to its undoing.

The validity of this theory depends partly upon its success—if it be so—in explaining the puzzles, partly upon the actual evidence showing the association together of these five men. This evidence may be tabulated briefly as follows:

| | Alcibiades. | Theramenes. | Adeimantus. | Thrasybulus. | Aristocrates. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alcibiades . | . . | Thuc. viii. 86. 6<br>Diod. xiii. 50<br>Diod. xiii. 38<br>Diod. xiii. 66<br>Xen. ii. 3, 42 | Xen. i. 4, 21<br>Nepos, Alc. 7<br>Andoc. Myst. 16<br>See note below | Thuc. viii. 81. 1<br>Diod. xiii. 50<br>Nepos, Alc. 7 | Xen. i. 4, 21 |
| Theramenes . | See "Alcib." | . . | . . | Trierarchs at Arginusae<br>Diod. xiii. 50<br>Xen. ii. 3, 42 | Lysias, Erat. 66<br>Thuc. viii. 89 |
| Adeimantus . | See "Alcib." | . . | . . | See note below | Xen. i. 4, 21<br>See note below |
| Thrasybulus . | See "Alcib." | See "Theramenes" | See note below | . . | See note below |
| Aristocrates . | See "Alcib." | Thuc. viii. 89 | Xen. i. 4, 21<br>See note below | See note below | |

Alcibiades, Adeimantus, Aristocrates, and Thrasybulus are all generals together in 407 B.C. On the fall of Alcibiades only Aristocrates of these four is general again in 406 B.C., if this is the same Aristocrates. But Beloch thinks there were two different persons of the same name—which in view of *C.I.A.* i. 188, is probable. Cf. Beloch, *Attische Politik*, p. 294, 327; *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 100.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

(Based on Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, III. 2, xxv-xxxv)

| B.C. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 433 | July. | Alliance of Athens and Corcyra. |
| | Sept. | Battle of Sybota Islands. |
| | Winter. | Alliances of Athens with Rhegium and Leontini. |
| | " | Pericles' "Megarian Decree". |
| 432 | Spring. | Revolt of Potidaea. |
| | Summer. | Meeting of the Peloponnesian League at Sparta. |
| | | Vote for war. |
| | Sept. | Phormio sent to the blockade of Potidaea. |
| | Winter. | Spartan-Athenian negotiations. |

### THE "ARCHIDAMIAN WAR," 431-421

| B.C. | B.C. | |
|---|---|---|
| 431 | April 4. | Theban attempt to surprise Plataea. |
| | May. | Archidamus invades Attica. |
| | July. | The Athenian fleet sails for the Peloponnese. |
| | Sept. | Return of the fleet. Ravaging of Megara. |
| 430 | June. | Second invasion of Attica. The plague breaks out in Athens. |
| | " | Pericles' naval expedition to Epidaurus. |
| | July. | Hagnon's expedition to Potidaea. |
| | Aug. | Athenian peace embassy to Sparta. |
| | Sept. | Pericles prosecuted and fined. |
| | Winter. | Surrender of Potidaea. |
| | " | Phormio sent to Naupactus. |
| 429 | Spring. | Pericles generalissimo. |
| | June. | Archidamus besieges Plataea. |
| | " | Athenian disaster at Spartolus. |
| | Summer. | Cnemus' expedition to Acarnania and defeat at Stratus. |
| | " | Phormio's victory at Chalcis. |
| | Sept. | Death of Pericles. |
| | Autumn. | Phormio's victory at Naupactus. |
| | " | Sitalces' invasion of Macedonia. |
| | Winter. | Cnemus' raid on Salamis. |
| 428 | June. | Third invasion of Attica. |
| | " | Revolt of Mitylene. |
| 428 | Sept. | Paches blockades Mitylene. |
| 427 | June. | Fourth invasion of Attica. |
| | " | Alcidas' expedition to Ionia. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | July. | Surrender of Mitylene. |
| | Aug. | Alcidas' expedition to Corcyra. Battle of Corcyra. Eurymedon at Corcyra. Triumph of the Corcyrean democrats. |
| | " | Surrender of Plataea. |
| | Sept. | Laches' expedition to Sicily. |
| 426 | June. | Demosthenes' expedition to Acarnania. |
| | " | Nicias at Melos and Tanagra. |
| | " | Spartan fort at Heraclea. |
| | Aug. | Demosthenes' Aetolian expedition. The disaster of Aegitium. |
| | Autumn. | Eurylochus' expedition against Naupactus and Acarnania. Demosthenes' victories at Olpae and Idomene. |
| | Winter. | Pythodorus sails for Sicily. |
| 425 | May. | Fifth invasion of Attica. Demosthenes fortifies Pylos. |
| | June. | Spartans blockaded on Sphacteria Island. |
| | Aug. | Surrender of the Sphacteria garrison. |
| | Sept. | Eurymedon and Sophocles sail to Sicily. |
| | " | Nicias' expedition to the Corinthian coast. |
| | Autumn. | Cleon at Argos. |
| 424 | April. | The Congress of Gela. |
| | June. | Nicias takes Cythera. |
| | Summer. | Athenian operations against Boeotia. |
| | " | Brasidas' march to Chalcidice. |
| | Aug. | Athenian attempt on Megara. Capture of Nisaea. |
| | Nov. | Battle of Delium. |
| | Dec. | Brasidas takes Amphipolis. |
| 423 | April. | The Truce of Laches. Brasidas takes Scione and Mende. |
| | Summer. | Nicias' expedition to Chalcidice. He recaptures Mende. |
| 422 | Sept. | Cleon's expedition to Chalcidice. |
| | Oct. | Battle of Amphipolis. Deaths of Brasidas and Cleon. |
| 421 | April 11. | The "Peace of Nicias" concluded. |
| | Summer. | Athenian recapture of Scione. |

## THE "YEARS OF PEACE," 420-416, AND THE "SICILIAN WAR," 415-413

| B.C. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 420 | March. | Boeotian-Spartan alliance. |
| | July. | The "Quadruple Alliance" of Athens, Argos, Mantinea, Elis. |
| 419 | Summer. | Alcibiades in Achaea. Argos attacks Epidaurus. |
| 418 | Summer. | Agis' expedition against Argos. |
| | " | Euthydemus' expedition to Thrace. |
| | Aug. | Battle of Mantinea. |
| | Nov. | Spartan-Argive alliance. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 417 | Feb. | Ostracism of Hyperbolus |
| | Summer. | Nicias' expedition to Chalcidice. |
| | Winter. | Chaeremon's blockade of Macedonia. |
| 416 | May. | Athenian expediton against Melos. |
| | Summer. | Alcibiades at Argos. |
| | Winter. | Surrender of Melos. |
| | " | Athenian mission of inquiry to Egesta. |
| 415 | May 22. | The mutilation of the Hermae. |
| | June. | Athenian great expedition to Sicily sails. |
| | Sept. | Recall and flight of Alcibiades. |
| | Nov. | Battle of Dascon. |
| 414 | April. | The siege of Syracuse begins. |
| | | Death of Lamachus. |
| | Summer. | Evetion besieges Amphipolis. |
| | Aug. | Gylippus reaches Syracuse. |
| | " | The Athenian fleet ravages Laconia. Open war resumed. |
| | Oct. | The Syracusan third cross-wall completed. |
| | Nov. | Nicias' letter home. |
| 413 | March. | Agis at Decelea. |
| | " | Demosthenes sails for Sicily. |
| | May. | Gylippus captures Plemmyrion. |
| | July. | Corinthian naval action at Erineus. |
| | " | Syracusan victory in the Great Harbour. |
| | " | Arrival of Demosthenes and Eurymedon. Night-attack on Epipolae. |
| | Aug. 27. | Eclipse of the moon. |
| | Sept. 7. | Final Athenian defeat in the Great Harbour. |
| | " 9. | The Athenian retreat begins. |
| | "14. | Surrender of Demosthenes. |
| | " 16. | The disaster of the Assinarus. Surrender of Nicias. |

## THE "IONIAN WAR," 412-404

| B.C. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 412 | Spring. | Revolt and recapture of Lesbos. |
| | June. | Alcibiades sails to Chios. Revolt of Chios. |
| | Summer. | First Spartan-Persian treaty. |
| | Oct. | Alcibiades goes to Tissaphernes. |
| | Nov. | Second Spartan-Persian treaty. |
| | Winter. | Astyochus' victory at Syme Island. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 411 | Jan. | Revolt of Rhodes. |
| | Feb. | Third Spartan-Persian treaty. |
| | March. | The Boeotians take Oropus. |
| | April. | Dercyllidas' march to the Hellespont. Capture of Abydos. |
| | June 8. | The Oligarchy of the Four Hundred seize the power. |
| | Aug. | Revolt of Byzantium and Calchedon. |
| | " | Alcibiades recalled by the fleet at Samos. |
| | Sept. | Mindarus' voyage to the Hellespont. |
| | " | Athenian defeat at Eretria. Fall of the Oligarchy. |
| | " | Battle of Cynossema. |

**[End of Thucydides' History.]**

| B.C. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 410 | March. | Battle of Cyzicus. |
| | Spring. | Spartan offer of peace. |
| | Summer. | Naval operations in the Hellespont. |
| | Winter. | Sparta recovers Pylos. |
| | | Megara recovers Nisaea. |
| 409 | Spring. | Alcibiades recovers Calchedon and Selymbria. |
| | Summer. | Siege of Byzantium. |
| | Winter. | Surrender of Byzantium. |
| 408 | June 16. | Alcibiades' return to Athens. |
| | Autumn. | Cyrus replaces Tissaphernes at Sardis. |
| | " | Lysander sails to Ephesus. |
| | Oct. | Alcibiades sails from Athens. |
| 407 | Spring. | Alcibiades' "plunder" of Cyme. |
| | | Lysander's victory at Notium. |
| | | Alcibiades dismissed from his command. |
| 406 | June. | Callicratidas blockades Conon in Mitylene. |
| | Aug. | Battle of Arginusae. |
| | | Spartan offer of peace. |
| | Oct. | Trial and execution of the Generals at Athens. |
| 405 | Aug. | Lysander at the Hellespont. |
| | Sept. | "Battle" of Aegospotami. |
| | Nov. | Blockade of the Peiraeus. |
| 404 | Jan. | Theramenes' embassy to Lysander. |
| | April. | Theramenes returns to Athens: his embassy to Sparta. |
| | April 25. | Capitulation of Athens. Peace with Sparta. |

* * * * *

| B.C. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 404 | Summer. | Surrender of Samos. |
| | " | The "Thirty Tyrants" at Athens. |
| | Winter. | Death of Theramenes. |
| | " | Death of Alcibiades. |
| 403 | Spring. | Thrasybulus' march on Athens. |
| | Summer. | Overthrow of the "Thirty Tyrants". |
| | " | Restoration of the Democracy and general amnesty |

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{1} Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 707.

{2} Cf. Hicks and Hill, Greek Historical Inscriptions, No. 51, 52.

{3} Thuc. i. 44.

{4} Cf.Thuc. i. 35, 40, 53.

{5} Thuc. i. 45-55.

{6} Thuc. i. 68.

{7} *Acharnians*, 729-835 (Rogers's translation).

{8} Thuc. i. 67, 139; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 30.

{9} The one missing numeral in the Quota List of B.C. 436 for Aegina's tribute is surely  before the HHH. To supply one of the other alternatives H,  , or X would make Aegina's tribute 4, 8, or 13, respectively, whereas it has been 30 talents steadily up to this year. It is incredible that Pericles should have so lowered Aegina's tribute. This additional reason for Aegina's discontent is mentioned by no writer. The Quota List is in Hicks and Hill, Greek Historical Inscriptions, No. 48.

{10} Thuc. i. 139, 140.

{11} Thuc. i. 67.

{12} Thuc. i. 58-66.

{13} Thuc. i. 71.

{14} *History of Greece* (Eng. trans), vol. ii. Chap. 21, note 8.

{15} Thuc. i. 23. 6.

{16} Thuc. i. 87.

{17} Thuc. i. 125.

{18} Thuc. i. 139.

{19} Thuc. i. 78. 4.

{20} Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* i. p. 516.

{21} Thuc. vii. 18. 2, 3.

{22} Thuc. i. 81. 6.

{23} Thuc. i. 86

{24} Thuc. i. 120-124

{25} The Kaiser to his army (August 1914).

{26} Especially Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* i. pp. 515 *sq*.

{27} Cf. Thuc. i. 140, 141.

{28} *Acharnians*, 531.

[{29}] Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, p. 30. G. Dickins, in the *Classical Quarterly* for October 1911, suggests some sound criticisms of this curious book.

[{30}] The new evidence of the Oxyrhyncus Papyrus (v. 1908, pp. 110 *sq.)*, the fragment of the *Hellenica*, perhaps of Cratippus (but this is a famous controversy), gives a remarkable picture of the prosperity of the Attic countryside and its plunder by the Thebans in the war (chapter xii.).

[{31}] Holm, *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 305.

[{32}] *Acharnians*, 496-556.

[{33}] *Peace*, 603-648 (Rogers's translation.)

[{34}] *Oecon.* iii. 13.

[{35}] Bury, *History of Greece*, p. 359.

[{36}] Thuc. ii. 45. 2.

[{37}] *Pericles*, 32

[{38}] This is implied in Thuc. ii. 13. I.

[{39}] *Griech. Gesch.* i. p. 517.

[{40}] Pöhlmann, *Griech. Gesch.* p. 123.

[{41}] Page 529.

[{42}] This is controversial, as Thuc. ii. 13 gives 29,000 as the hoplite total, and Diodorus xii. 41 shows that Ephorus accepted this figure from Thucydides. But it does not square with probability (the proportion of "old" to "young" men), or with other totals in Thuc. *(e.g.* ii. 31; iv. 90 with iii 87; etc.), and has been criticised successfully by Delbruck *(Gesch. der Kriegskunst*, pp. 11-24) and Beloch. I adopt the latter's suggestion of 6000 for 16,000 in ii. 31.

[{43}] Thuc. iv. 94.1; with 93. 3

[{44}] Cf. Grundy, *Thucydides*, pp. 310-311.

[{45}] Thuc. ii. 22.

[{46}] Thuc. vii. 57.

[{47}] Pausanias i. 15. I; x. 10. 4. But the controversy about the Athenian victory of Oenoe and its date cannot here be discussed. Thucydides does not mention it.

[{48}] In Boeotia, cavalry were to heavy infantry in the proportion of 1 to 10, according to the newly found papyrus, chapter xi. 4.

[{49}] Androtion ap. Schol. Sophocles, *Oed. Col.* 698.

[{50}] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 33.

[{51}] Pseudo-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* 2.1 (date about 425 B.C.); see below, p. 92.

[{52}] Thuc. i. 141. 6; ii. 39. 3.

[{53}] Thuc. ii. 13.

[{54}] Thuc. viii. 6.

{55} Thuc. i. 25. 4; ii. 25. 1.

{56} Thuc. i. 46; ii. 93. 2.

{57} In the attack on Zacynthus, 430 B.C., Thuc. ii. 66.

{58} Thuc. iii. 26-33. See below, Chapter III. § 4.

{59} Thuc. vii. 34.

{60} Thuc. ii. 7. 2. 500 is the roundest of Greek round numbers, as Busolt points out in another connection (*Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 183). No ships were sent (Thuc. iii. 86. 2).

{61} Thuc. viii. 26. 35.

{62} Thuc. i. 121. 4.

{63} Thuc. i. 142. 9. Cf. ii. 85. 2.

{64} Thuc i. 80. 4.

{65} Plutarch, *Apoph. Lac. Arch.* 7.

{66} Thuc. i. 121. 3; 143. 1. That iv. 118. 1 implies such appropriation of sacred treasures from Delphi is most unlikely. Cf. Classen, *ad loc.*

{67} Thuc. i. 121. 5; Diodorus xiv. 17; Hicks, *Manual of Greek Inscriptions* (1882), No. 43.

{68} Beloch, *Rhein. Mus.* 39, pp. 244-249.

{69} Thuc. i. 141. 5.

{70} Thuc. ii. 13.

{71} Thuc. ii. 70. 2.

{72} Thuc. i. 143. 5; 144. I; ii. 65. 7.

{73} Thuc. iii. 19.

{74} Thuc. i. 81

{75} Thuc. iii. 39. 3.

{76} Thuc. iii. 13. 6.

{77} Thuc. ii. 63. 2.

{78} Thuc. ii. 63.

{79} Thuc. ii. 65.10.

{80} Thuc. ii. 13. 9.

{81} Thuc. i. 143. 4, 5; ii. 13. 2; ii. 65. 7.

{82} In nobler fashion the Portuguese *were* ready to lay waste their own lands before the French invader, and Wellington notably availed himself of his allies' self-sacrifice.

{83} Thuc. ii. 11. 20.

{84} Thuc. ii.71. 1.

{85} Thuc. iii. 89. 1.

{86} Thuc. ii. 59; iv. 6.

{87} Thuc. ii. 31; iv. 66. 1.

{88} Thuc. ii. 25. 30.

{89} Thuc. ii. 26. 32.

{90} Thuc. ii. 56. Plutarch, *Pericles,* 35.

{91} Thuc. ii. 59

{92} Thuc. ii. 65. 3, 4.

{93} Thuc. ii. 65. 6.

{94} Thuc. ii. 65. 6-13. This is certainly the most remarkable chapter in Thucydides, unless iii. 82, or the "Funeral Oration "may challenge it.

{95} G. F. R. Henderson, *Science of War* (1905), p. 70.

{96} Von der Goltz, *Nation in Arms,* p. 362.

{97} Cf. Henderson, *Science of War,* pp. 99-100.

{98} ap. G. F. R. Henderson, *Stonewall Jackson,* i. p. 481.

{99} *German Official Account of the War in South Africa* (Eng. trans.), ii. p. 339. This is the famous doctrine of Clausewitz—"the real schoolmaster of the Prussian Army ". See Von Caemmerer, *Development of Strategical Science* (trans. by K. von Donat), chap. 5, p. 87.

{100} Delbrück. Clausewitz himself takes no notice of the strategy which, in Delbrück's words, "aims more at exhausting and enduring than at annihilating the enemy". Cf. Von Caemmerer, *op. cit.* p. 88.

{101} It is true, as Mr. C. T. Atkinson suggests to me, that the "strategy of exhaustion" may hope so to reduce the enemy's forces that eventually they may be met at last in fair fight on the open field. "In this way Wellington himself employed it in his campaign against Massena in 1810-1811, and so successfully that the latter retired only in the very nick of time." But this was beyond Pericles' wildest dreams, and so must be relegated to a footnote.

{102} Maurice, *Diary of Sir John Moore,* ii. p. 73

{103} *Stonewall Jackson,* ii. p. 228.

{104} Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2. p. 943 refuses to identify the pestilence with bubonic plague, typhus, smallpox, or any precise pest.

{105} Unless it smote Phigalia also in the Peloponnese (Pausanias viii. 41. 9).

{106} Thuc. ii. 17, 52.

{107} Thuc. ii. 58.

{108} Thuc. iv. 70.

{109} Cf. Kingsley, *Hereward the Wake,* chap. xxxv.

{110} Thuc. ii. 18,19.

{111} Cf. Hamley, *Operations of War,* pp. 230-232; James, *Strategy,* p. 102.

{112} Thuc. v. 3, 5.

{113} G. B, Grundy, *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* xviii. (1898), p. 218.

{114} H. Delbrück, *Die Strategic des Perikles* (Berlin, 1890), is in this respect useful.

{115} Thuc. iv. 38

{116} *Griech. Gesch.* p. 521.

{117} Quoted in *Imperial Strategy,* by the military correspondent of the *Times* (1906), p. 167.

{118} Maurice, *Diary of Sir John Moore,* ii. P. 151.

{119} Thuc. iv. 54.

{120} Major-General Sir George Aston, in a lecture at University College, London, on November 12,1925 *(v. Times* of November 13, p. 17)—a criticism of the orders to our Admiralty "to prepare to take the Gallipoli peninsula without the aid of troops" in January 1915. So Mr. C. T. Atkinson writes to me: "A fleet having established 'command of the sea' has done practically all it can. It cannot complete its task: only the land force can do that, just as the bowler who bowls for catches is helpless if his fielders let the ball slip through their fingers to the grass." But Pericles put himself on to bowl for catches without any fielders at all.

{121} Cf. Fortescue, *Wellington,* pp. 75-76.

{122} Maurice, *Diary of Sir John Moore,* ii. p. 293.

{123} McClure, *Italy in North Africa,* p. 229.

{124} In actual fact, Mr. C. T. Atkinson points out that the ghastly loss of life was due to a direct disobedience of Marlborough's orders by a subordinate, the Prince of Orange. "Political malignity has misrepresented the story and decried the battle which was skilfully planned." The wonderful picture of the battle and its casualties in Thackeray's *Esmond* (Book III. chap. i.) is tribute to the success of this "political malignity". It was exactly this which the Athenian general always had to fear.

{125} *Official Account of the War in south Africa* (Eng. Trans.), ii. P. 227. Cf. Von der Goltz, Nation in Arms, p. 282.

{126} Thuc, iv. 73.

{127} Herodotus vi. 108; Thuc. iii. 55. 1; 68. 5. Cf. Grote, chap. xxxi. *ad fin.* The emendation of the Thucydides text from 93 to 83 seems attractive.

{128} Thuc. ii. 71.

{129} Thuc. ii. 7. 1.

{130} Thuc. ii. 2-6.

{131} Oxyrhyncus Papyri, v. (1908), chap. xii. 3. The "threaten" is an ingenious but doubtful addition to a broken sentence. I hold still by Cratippus as the most likely author. "P", however (for "Papyrus"), is safe and popular.

{132} Thuc. ii. 71-72

{133} Thuc. v. 84-116.

{134} Thuc. ii. 72.

{135} Thuc. ii. 73. 3

{136} Thuc. ii. 74. 2

{137} Thuc. ii. 75-78; iii. 20-24.

{138} Thuc. iii. 52.

{139} Thuc. iii. 52-68; Diodorus xv. 46; Pausanias ix. 1.

{140} Thuc. ii. 78. 3; v. 32.

{141} Anonymus Argentinensis, ed. Bruno Keil (Strassburg, 1902). This particular interpretation of Keil's § 3 is not his own.

{142} U. Wilcken, ap. *Hermes,* xxiv. (1907), pp. 374-418; especially on § 4, which becomes a mere comment on Demosthenes 597. 19.

{143} Cp. "He believed in Italy as the Saints believe in God" (Trevelyan on Garibaldi).

{144} Thuc. ii. 42-46.

{145} Thuc. ii. 64.

{146} Thuc. ii. 65.9. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic,* p. 100.

{147} Maurice, *Diary of Sir John Moore,* ii. p. 353.

{148} *The Influence of Sea-Power upon History,* p. 453.

{149} Thuc. iv. 53.

{150} *Acharnians,* 544-554 (Rogers's translation). The "Pallases" were gilded wooden figure-heads on the ships' bows.

{151} Pseudo-Xenophon, *Ath. Pol.* i, 2; grotesquely labelled "The Old Oligarch," by A. E. Zimmern.

{152} *Ib.* 2, 7.

{153} Herodotus viii. 90. Cf. Grundy, *The Great Persian War,* p. 399.

{154} Thuc. i. 48-51.

{155} A. B. Cook, ap. *A Companion to Greek Studies,* vi, II, p. 493—an invaluable section on "ships". In like manner the Japanese soldiers in the Russo-Japanese war regarded themselves as no better than mere "human bullets". Remembering the Imperial Rescript to Army and Navy on the outbreak of that war ("Duty is heavier than a mountain and so to be much regarded: Death is lighter than a feather and therefore to be despised") they were content to be hurled against the enemy as had they been but bullets in very fact. So each man "added a flower of honour to his family name".

{156} Thuc. ii. 83, 84

{157} Cf. Custance, *War at Sea,* p. 35.

{158} Cf. Custance, *War at Sea,* p. 37.

{159} See below, Chapter IV. § 2.

{160} Thuc. ii. 85. 2.

{161} Thuc. ii. 85. 1.

{162} Thuc. ii. 25. 2.

{163} Thuc. ii. 85. 4-6.

{164} Thuc. ii. 89.

{165} Thuc. ii. 87. 9.

{166} Or, technically, "in four line ahead columns, disposed abeam, with nineteen or twenty ships in each" (Custance, *War at Sea,* p. 38).

{167} "As so often happens, a fleet whose base is not adequately garrisoned finds its liberty of action much restricted. Foch's doctrine of *súreté* is violated. Vital spots must be immune against surprise attacks if the main force is to manœuvre freely "(Mr. C. T. Atkinson).

{168} Technically, in naval language (less comprehensible by some of us), "Cnemus made the signal to turn together eight points—90 degrees—to port, bore down in four lines abreast, disposed astern", etc. (Custance, *War at Sea,* p. 38).

{169} Thuc. ii. 86-92.

{170} Thuc. ii. 102. 1.

{171} Pausanias x. 11. 6.

{172} See immediately below. Cf. Rogers ad Aristophanes, *Knights,* v. 562.

{173} Pausanias i. 29. 3; Nepos, *Chabrias,* 4; Diodorus xvi. 7.

{174} Thuc. i. 117.

{175} Thuc. i. 64; ii. 29.

{176} *Peace,* v. 338-347.

{177} Schol. ad Aristophanes, *Peace,* v. 347; Pausanias i. 23. 10; Boeckh ad Meineke, *Fragm. Comm. Attic.* ii. 1, pp. 527-528 (a note on Eupolis' lost comedy *The Taxiarchs,* which mentioned Phormio).

{178} Aristophanes, *Knights,* v. 551-570 (Rogers's translation): produced in Feb. 424 B.C.

{179} Conrad Aiken, *Senlin.*

{180} See below, pages 181-190.

{181} Thuc. iii. 2, 18, 25.

{182} The "42" ships of Thuc. iii. 26. 1 is inconsistent with the "40" of the rest of his narrative (iii. 16. 3; 29. 1; 69. 1; 76 with 69. 1). Perhaps, however, the "40" is, as Classen holds, but the "round number.

{183} Thuc. iii. 15-17.

{184} Thuc. iii. 26-28. See for details below; Chapter V. § 2.

{185} Thuc. i. 141. 4.

{186} Thuc. iii, 29, I.

{187} Thuc. iii. 31. 2

{188} Thuc. iii. 32. 3.

{189} Thuc. iii. 33.

{190} Thuc. iii. 69.

{191} Admiral Custance presents a long somewhat intricate account of what may have happened, imagining "the circle" formed gradually under Athenian pressure. "Whether it correctly represents the actual facts can never be known for certain. The assumed Athenian tactics are similar in principle to those of the Japanese in the action with the Chinese off the Yalu in September 1904" *(War at Sea,* pp. 36-37).

{192} Thuc. iii. 76-81.

{193} Thuc. iii. 92.

{194} The "3" of Thuc. ii. 65. 12 is amended to "8" by Shilleto, to "10" by Haacke and Classen. Xenophon, *Hellenica,* ii. 4, 21, justifies the "10".

{195} Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, *War at Sea* (1919), p. 109.

{196} Thuc. i. 143. 1.

{197} *Frogs,* v. 1069-1074 (Rogers's translation).

{198} Beloch, *Bevölkerung,* p. 194; Thuc. ii. 80. 3.

{199} Thuc. ii. 68.

{200} Thuc. iii. 108. 2.

{201} Thuc. iii. 106. 2; iii. 4.

{202} Thuc. ii. 66.

{203} Thuc. i. 27; 46.

{204} Thuc. iv. 42.

{205} So Thuc. ii. 102. But Leake shows that the great marshes on the north of the city protected it better than the Achelous on the opposite side. "It is evident that Thucydides was not very well acquainted with the locality" *(Travels in Northern Greece,* iii. pp. 536-570, with a plan of the site p. 562).

{206} Thuc. i. 111. 3; ii. 82; 102.

{207} Thuc. ii. 30. 1; 33. 1.

{208} Thuc. ii. 30. 1.

{209} Thuc. i. 55; iii. 114. 3; iv. 49.

{210} For Olpae, see below, § 5.

{211} For Stratus, see below, § 2. Cf. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece,* i. 137-143; iii. 513.

{212} Thuc. ii. 30.

{213} Thuc. ii. 33.

{214} Thuc. ii. 66-69.

{215} Thuc. ii. 80. 1.

{216} Thuc. ii. 80. 5, 6.

{217} See above, Chapter III. § 4.

{218} See above, Chapter III. § 3.

{219} Thuc. ii. 80-82.

{220} See above, Chapter III. § 3.

{221} Thuc. ii. 93, 94.

{222} Compare Phormio's peril at Naupactus (Chapter III. § 3 above).

{223} Thuc. vii. 94. See below, Chapter X. § 3.

{224} Thuc. iii. 7.

{225} See above, Chapter III. § 4.

{226} Thuc. iii. 70-81, 85.

{227} Thuc. iii. 82-83. Chapter 84 is almost certainly a later non-Thucydidean insertion. I agree entirely with G. F. Abbott, *Thucydides*, pp. 219-221.

{228} Thuc. iii. 94, 95.

{229} Thuc. iii. 94. 5. Woodhouse, *Aetolia*, is indispensable for this and the rest of Aetolian history.

{230} Thuc. ii. 101. 2.

{231} Woodhouse, *Aetelia*, p. 361

{232} Thuc. iii. 97. 2.

{233} Description and plan from Woodhouse, pp. 363, 364.

{234} Woodhouse, p. 368.

{235} Thuc. iii. 96-98.

{236} Thuc. iii. 98. 5.

{237} A recollection, thirty-two years old, of the Rev. E. M. Walker's still famous Oxford Lectures on the Peloponnesian War.

{238} Bury, History of Greece, p. 423.

{239} Cf. Thuc. iv. 30. 1.

{240} Cunliffe, *History of the Boer War*, ii. p. 360.

{241} Thuc. iii. 100-102.

{242} Three thousand in Thuc. iii. 105; but 1000 in Diodorus xii. 60, who probably derives from Thucydides. The latter figure is the more probable. Cf. Beloch, *Bevölkerung*, pp. 195-196.

{243} Thuc. iii. 105. Map from Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, iv. p. 242.

{244} Thuc. iii. 106.

{245} Thuc. iii. 107, 108.

{246} Nation in Arms, p. 418.

{247} Thuc. iii. 109.

{248} Thuc. iii. 111.

{249} Thuc. iii. 109. 2.

{250} Thuc. iii. 112. 7

{251} Thuc. iii. 110-112.

{252} Thuc. iii. 113.

{253} See Beloch, *Bevölkerung*, p. 193. "Thucydides does not venture to give a figure and we had better abstain also", remarks Classen sagaciously.

{254} Thuc. iii. 33.

{255} Thuc. iii. 33. 1.

{256} Thuc. iv. 2.

{257} Thuc. iv. 46-48.

{258} Thuc. iv. 49.

{259} Thuc. iv. 77.

{260} Aristophanes, *Knights*, 129, 132, 254, 765; and Schol. ad 129; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 24; Thuc. iii. 19; Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* p. 532.

{261} Eupolis, frag. 290, 308; Hermippus, frag. 46; Plato, frag. 107, 216.

{262} Couat, *Aristophane*, chap. i. Croiset, *Aristophane et les partis à Athènes*, dissents.

{263} The statesman is the villain of the *Knights*, though mentioned by name once only (v. 976) in a popular little choral ode in that play. But the traits of Cleon, personal and political, are unmistakable in the "Paphlagonian", and no one from antiquity to the present day has ever had any doubt about the identification. "The comic poet sticks fast to anonymity when approaching so near reality," says Ivo Bruns. His Cleon is no mere "type".

{264} Thuc. iii. 36. 6; iv. 21. 3; 28. 5; v. 16. 1.

{265} Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, pp. xiv, 79:

{266} See below, Chap. VII. § 3.

{267} Thuc. iii. 47. 2.

{268} *Acharnians*, 377-382 (Rogers's translation). Cf. v. 502-504, 630-631. The story of the *Babylonians* is in the

Schol. ad *Acharnians*, v. 378. Cf. Rogers's edition of this play, pp. xvii-xxiii, and Gilbert, *Beiträge*, p. 154.

{269} *e.g. Knights*, 225, 238, 260, 278, 288, 300, 314, 325, 461; *Wasps*, 287, 345, 464, 488; *Peace*, 108, 408, 640.

{270} *Knights*, 438 (Potidaea), 832 (Mitylene), 103, 325, 1034; *Peace*, 644; *Acharnians*, 6; a common charge against all demagogues *(Wasps*, 671). The Athenians were astonished when Cleophon later died a poor man.

{271} *Knights*, 768, 790, 797, 812-813.

{272} *Acharnians*, 659-665.

{273} *Wasps*, 35.

{274} *Clouds*, 591: (hardly a "gull" in our sense).

{275} *Acharnians*, 381; *Knights*, 137; *Wasps*, 1034; *Peace*, 757.

{276} *Wasps*, 1033; *Peace*, 756.

{277} *Knights*, 1030; *Peace*, 313.

{278} *Wasps*, 1031; *Peace*, 757.

{279} *Peace*, 48.

{280} *Wasps*, 36.

{281} *Knights*, 255; *Wasps*, 197, 409.

{282} *Knights*, 304.

{283} *Wasps*, 596.

{284} Rogers.

{285} *Knights*, 1000-1006; cf. 115, 960.

{286} *i.e.* Athenians. The oracle must use stately language.

{287} *Knights*, 1015-1019 (Rogers's translation).

{288} *Peace*, 646-656 (Rogers's translation).

{289} Cf. Kaibel ap. Pauly-Wissowa, *R.-E.* ii. 1, p. 992.

{290} *Frogs*, 807: a point well pressed home by Vischer in his excellent article on "Die Benützung der alten Komödie" ap. his *Kleine Schriften.*

{291} Critias, ap. Aelian, *Var. Hist.*, x. 17.

{292} Thuc. iii. 37. 1.

{293} Cf. *e.g.* Hicks and Hill, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 62.

{294} The literary evidence for the so-called "Doubling of the Tribute" is late and poor; viz. Aeschines, *De Fals*, Leg. p. 337; Andocides, *De Pace*, 9; Plutarch, *Aristides*, 24; pseudo-Andocides, *Alcibiades*, chap. xi But there is good indirect evidence of a great increase of revenue from the tribute between 431 and 421 B.C., in Thuc. v. 18 (where the "assessment of Aristides" is clearly a concession to the Chalcidic cities) and in Aristophanes, Wasps,

665, compared with Xenophon, *Anab.* vii. 1, 27. The poet here gives 2000 talents as income in 423 B.C. This minus property tax (200) and the "non-tribute" sources (400) leaves 1400 talents for the tribute. Grote calls the "2000" a figure "too gross to be entertained". His scepticism is unconvincing. The rise has since his day been put beyond question by the discovery of the famous "Assessment of Tribute" of the year 425 B.C.—the only inscription of its class, *i.e.* which gives the whole (and not the quota of one-sixtieth) of the tribute demanded. Though this is fragmentary, enough remains to prove the increase *e.g.*, one of the four Tribute-paying "districts", the Hellespontine, is by itself assessed at nearly 296 talents. In the Island District, too, the totals for 26 cities which together have hitherto paid about 80 talents amount to 156. So Tenos rises from 3 to 10; Andros from 6 to 15; Paros from 16 1/5 to 30. Each city is dealt with individually. See Hicks and Hill, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 64.

It is the date of this inscription which connects the "doubling" inevitably with Cleon. For Antiphon see Gilbert, *Beiträge*, pp. 186, 187.

{295} *Griech. Gesch.* p. 130.

{296} See Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 393-396.

{297} Thuc. vii. 86. 5.

{298} Aristophanes, *Knights*, 33, 111. Cf. Gilbert, *Beiträge*, p. 147.

{299} Ivo Bruns.

{300} Holm.

{301} Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 533.

{302} Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, p. 190.

{303} Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 396.

{304} Thuc. i. 116, 117; cf. i. 19; vi. 85.

{305} Thuc. iii. 2; viii. 4, 100; Strabo xiii. 1, 3.

{306} Thuc. iii. 2

{307} Thuc. iii. 2-4.

{308} Thuc. iii. 4-6.

{309} Thuc. iii. 7-15.

{310} Thuc. iii. 18.

{311} See above, p. 114.

{312} Thuc. iii. 25-29. See above, Chap. III. § 4, for Alcidas' exploits.

{313} But see note below, p. 187.

{314} Thuc. iii. 35.

{315} Thuc. iii. 36; 49. 4.

{316} Thuc. iii. 36. 4.

{317} Thuc. iii. 37-40.

{318} Thuc. iii. 42-48.

{319} Thuc. iii. 49; Diod. xii. 56.

{320} The number of the executed is plainly given by Thucydides, iii. 50. I. It has excited incredulity, *e.g.* in E. Abbott *(History of Greece,* iii. p. 175, note) and Müller-Strübing, who thinks it inserted by a "bloodthirsty interpolator" who for his hatred of democracy has "smuggled it" into the text of Thucydides. M.-S. "convinces nobody" (Beloch, *Att. Politik*, p. 33). (M.-S. is a wild and wordy writer with one brilliant suggestion about the Congress of Gela in his chief book, *Aristophanes und die historische Kritik*.) One German, H. Schütz, suggests a confusion here of Greek numerals, between Á (30) and A (1000). Cf. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1030, who also thinks the large number certainly exaggerated. So G. F. Abbott, *Thucydides*, p. 123. But Beloch works out the number of citizens of Mitylene as from six to seven thousand (*Bevölkerung*, p. 235). It was a "great city" (Diod. xvii. 29) with "many men in it." (Xen. *Hellen*, i. 6. 19.) Athens must be credited with the full tally of the slain.

{321} *History of Greece*, chap. 1. (vol. v. p. 176).

{322} Grote.

{323} Beloch, *Att. Pol.* p. 32.

{324} Evelyn Abbot, *History of Greece*, iii. p. 175 note.

{325} Plutarch, *Nicias*, 6; *Aristides*, 26.

{326} Agathias (A.D. 570), *Anthol.* vii. 614; quoted in and discussed by Grote, chap. 1. vol. v. p. 178-179. Cf. Beloch, *Att. Pol.* p. 33, note 1; G. F. Abbott, *Thucydides*, p. 123.

{327} The cleruchy to Lesbos: Thuc. iii. 50. An inscription, Hicks and Hill *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 61, proves that the cleruchs did go and were not absentee landlords. Cleon's work according to Beloch, *Att. Politik*, pp. 32-33. Subsequent history of the cleruchs, cf. Grote's long note vol. v, pp. 177-178. The whole cleruchic system: cf. Plutarch, *Pericles*, 11; Diod. xi. 88. Popularity at Athens proved by Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 200-205: Unpopularity in the Empire by C. I. A. ii. 17 A (Hicks and Hill, i. 112)—curiously enough *not* by any passage in the pseudo-Xenophontic "Constitution of the Athenians". Modern writers, Gilbert, Bury, Holm, Greenidge, Beloch, etc., discuss the system at length. That Athens often lowered tribute when she confiscated land for cleruchies (except from rebels) is certain.

{328} Thuc. viii. 3; 22.

{329} *Attische Politik*, pp. 34-35.

{330} *Acharnians*, 1078.

{331} As Müller-Strübing, in his *Aristophanes*, pp. 136 *sq.*, at enormous length, on the strength of the *Knights*, 947. When in 427 B.C. Cleon roundly accused the Knights of cowardice in the field (Theopompus, ap. *Schol. Acharnians*, 6) he was member of the Council.

{332} See above, Chap. IV. § 4.

{333} Thuc. iv. 2-14.

{334} Thuc. iii. 85. See above, Chap. IV. § 4.

{335} Thuc. iii. 86.

{336} Thuc. iii. 90, 99, 103, 115.

{337} Thuc. iv. 2, 4.

{338} Awdry, p. 14. See Note at end.

{339} Cornford, pp. 92-93. See Note at end.

{340} Thuc. iv. 3. 1.

{341} Grundy. See Note at end.

{342} Thuc. iv. 5. 2, 9. 2.

{343} The Greek word in Thuc. iv. 5. 2, does seem to imply hurry. Cornford, p. 92, rightly presses the point, though his "ten days or a fortnight's interval" may be an overestimate.

{344} Grundy, p. 14.

{345} Awdry, p. 15.

{346} One of Cornford's more unhappy phrases. This writer's most notable achievement is the following (p. 91):

"The building of the defences was a schoolboy frolic, begun (in schoolboy language) for a lark, to break the tedium of kicking heels and whistling for a wind. It kept them amused for six days, till the gale dropped."

Unnecessary whistling!

{347} Grundy, p. 21. "Nowhere more than 600, and at its narrowest point less than 500 feet across" (Burrows, p. 63).

{348} Grundy, p. 22.

{349} Thuc. iv. 8. 7.

{350} "It is extraordinarily deep for an entrance channel to a bay: 60 feet deep under the cliffs of Sphagia; over 200 feet deep in the middle; 90 feet deep close in shore on the side of the mainland" (Grundy, p. 3). Cf. Burrows, p. 72.

{351} See Note at end.

{352} Grundy, p. 33.

{353} Thuc. iv. 14. 3.

{354} Valla ap. Hude, note *ad loc.*

{355} Thuc. iv. 15; 16; 39.

{356} Thuc. iv. 17-41.

{357} Laski, in his *Grammar of Politics* (1925), declares that economic equality and administrative publicity are the conditions of any really democratic system. In the second respect at least Cleon would make Athens the ideal democracy.

{358} Thuc. iv. 17-22.

{359} Thuc. iv. 23. 1.

{360} Holm.

{361} Thuc. iv. 25.

{362} The arrangements for the sending of rations during the previous armistice do not seem to have enlightened

him.

{363} The topography of the following narrative is Grundy's (pp. 35-41).

{364} Grundy, p. 39.

{365} This is Thucydides' own comparison.

{366} Thuc. iv. 38. 3.

{367} Awdry, p. 19.

{368} Thuc. iv. 39. 3.

{369} Thuc. iv. 40. 1-2.

{370} *I.e.* the arrow.

{371} As at Grote's hands (vol. vi. p. 474).

{372} See below, Chap. VI.

{373} Cornford, p. 124 etc.

{374} "Its insanity consisted not in supposing that Sphakteria could be promptly captured if energy were shown, but in the expectation that it could be captured by a man who had neither capacity nor experience for command" (Grundy, Thucydides, p. 31). So Rogers (Aristophanes, *Knights*, pp. xxii-xxiii): "The boast was an insane one because Cleon had no more power to fulfil it than he had to pile Pelion upon Ossa...The entire merit...belonged to Demosthenes alone." Evelyn Abbott (*History of Greece*, iii, p. 218) is more fair to Cleon. G. F. Abbott (*Thucydides*, chap. 6) is not helpful.

{375} Awdry, p. 19.

{376} Mitford. Cf. Beloch, *Attische Politik*, p. 39.

{377} Aristophanes, ed. Hall and Geldart, frag. 100.

{378} Rogers (Aristophanes, *Knights*, p. xxiv).

{379} Thuc. iv. 42-45.

{380} Thuc. v. 75. 2.

{381} *Knights*, 50-58 (Rogers's translation).

{382} *Wasps*, 1029-1037 (Rogers's translation).

{383} Cornford's question-begging title for his valuable chapter.

{384} Father of the family reprobate, Callias.

{385} Thuc. iii. 91.

{386} *Oxyrhynch. Pap.* v. (1908), xi. 3.

{387} Thuc. iv. 76. See map *ad init.* Chap. II.

{388} Founded in 426 B.C. (Thuc. iii. 92).

{389} Mr. C. T. Atkinson.

{390} Thuc. iv. 89.

{391} A reminiscence of the Rev. E. M. Walker's Oxford lectures.

{392} Vischer, *Kleine Schriften.*

{393} Thuc. iv. 90-101.

{394} See note below.

{395} Euripides, *Suppliants*, 346-348.

{396} Plato, *Symposium*, p. 220. Cf. Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, c. 7.

{397} Plato, *Symposium*, p. 221 A. Cf. Plutarch, *loc. cit.*

{398} Plato, *Laches*, p. 181 B.

{399} "A modern French expert, Colin, in his *Les Transformations de la guerre*, argues that superior weight really was no advantage physically" (Mr. C. T. Atkinson). But the great Theban general Epaminondas in 371 B.C. won his notable victory at Leuctra over nearly twice the number of Spartans largely by massing his men fifty deep upon his left wing and so breaking the opposed line (which was twelve deep). An ounce of practice outweighs a good deal of theory. Epaminondas owed something to his fellow-countryman's example. In this respect Leuctra "derives" from Delium. The later Macedonian phalanx was drawn up sixteen deep, and its charge on level ground when its flanks were protected was as irresistible as the charge of the buffalo herd in the *Jungle Book*. Only five pike points projected in front of each man in the front line; the rest were carried slanting upwards in air to serve as a protection of a sort against missiles. Clearly it was held that the mere weight of the shove *was* effective. Cf. Polybius, xviii. 14.

{400} Thuc. v. 3; 18; 35-36; 39; 42; 46.

{401} Thuc. v. 26.

{402} Thuc. v. 64. See below, Chapter VIII.

{403} Thuc. vii. 19; 43. See below, Chapter IX.

{404} Thuc. viii. 3-4.

{405} Thuc. viii. 106.

{406} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 3, 15.

{407} Thuc. viii. 60; 98.

{408} Diodorus, xiii. 47. Cf. Grote, vol. vi. pp. 335-336.

{409} *Oxyrhync. Pap.* v. (1908), c. xii. 4-5. Thucydides mentions Corinthians in the garrison of Decelea (viii. 98) but not Boeotians.

{410} Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 2, 19.

{411} This *e.g.* accounts for the brevity of Herodotus' story of the battle of Himera in 480 B.C. which was hardly less important than was Salamis itself to the Greek world as a whole.

{412} There is a long appreciation of Hermocrates the "colonial statesman", his "insular policy", and "territorial patriotism", in Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iii. pp. 48 *sq.*

{413} Thuc. iii. 59-64.

{414} *History of Sicily,* iii. p. 52.

{415} Thuc. iv. 64. The words, of course, are the historian's: the sentiment he did not invent.

{416} Thuc. iv. 65. Freeman (p. 65) says "There is no further mention of Pythodorus." The Pythodorus of Thuc. v. 19. 24; vi. 105, may, however, have been the same general (so Classen, ad vi. 105); but Busolt (*Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1351, note 1) holds the contrary.

{417} Thuc. iv. 60. 1.

{418} Hude, not. crit. ad loc. So Rutherford thinks the words wrongly derived from Thuc. iv. 24. 3.

{419} Grote, chapter lvii. (vol. v. p. 535 note). So also Freeman (.*History of Sicily*, iii. pp. 56, 633) and Busolt *(Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1131, note 3), etc.

{420} Hyperbolus attacked by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians*, 846; *Clouds*, 552, 876, 1065; *Wasps*, 1007; *Peace*, 681-692, 921, 1319; *Thesmophoriazusae*, 840 *sq.*; by other comic poets, viz.: Eupolis in his *Marikas*, Hermippus in his *Artopolides*, Plato in his *Hyperbolus*, Leukon in his *Phrateres.* Cf. Schol. ad *Clouds*, 552-560.

{421} See below, pp. 333-335.

{422} Thuc. viii. 73. 3. G. F. Abbott well defends its genuineness (*Thucydides*, pp. 217-218).

{423} Schol. ad Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 554. See Rogers's Introduction to the *Knights*, pp. xxxix-xlii.

{424} Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1302-1315 (Rogers's translation, slightly altered).

{425} Aristophanes, *Knights*, 173-174, 1303. Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles*, 20, 21; *Alcibiades*, 17; *Nicias*, 12. The folly of the old emendation "Kalchedon" (*i.e.* Calchedon) for "Karchedon" *(i.e.* Carthage) in both Aristophanic passages is now admitted.

{426} Thuc. iv. 65. 4.

{427} In this explanation of the Congress of Gela I have followed Müller-Strübing, *Aristophanes und die historische Kritik* (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 13-23 This seems to me the one brilliant and convincing suggestion in an otherwise fatuous book of 735 pages.

{428} Thuc. v. 4-5.

{429} Thuc. iv. 66-73.

{430} Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, ii. p. 402.

{431} See above, Chapter IV. § 3.

{432} Thuc. iii. 51.

{433} Eight stades according to Thuc. iv. 66. 2; but 18 according to Strabo ix. 1, 4, p. 391. Leake *(Northern Greece*, ii. pp. 402-403) prefers the latter; Grote (c. liii. vol. v. p. 287 note) and others (cf. Classen ad Thuc. *loc. cit.)* the former.

{434} Thuc. iv. 109.

{435} Diodorus xiii. 65.

{436} So Delbrück. But Busolt, relying on Thuc. iv. 102. 4, questions this (*Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1152).

{437} Thuc. i. 56-66; ii. 13; 31; 58; 70. Plato, *Symposium*, 219-220.

{438} Thuc. ii. 79.

{439} Thuc. iv. 7.

{440} Thuc. ii. 80. See above, Chapter IV. § 2.

{441} Thuc. ii. 95-101.

{442} Thuc. ii. 29.

{443} Thuc. vii. 29.

{444} Hicks and Hill, *Manual of Greek Inscriptions*, No. 60.

{445} Thuc. iv. 78. 2.

{446} Thuc. iv. 80.

{447} Thuc. iv. 79. 1.

{448} Thuc. iv. 81.

{449} Thuc. iv. 82.

{450} Thuc. iv. 83.

{451} Thuc. iv. 84-87.

{452} Thuc. iv. 88.

{453} Thuc. iv. 88.

{454} Thuc. iv. 102-103.

{455} Description and Plan from Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, iii. 190-198, adapted to a recent British "war" survey.

{456} Thuc. iv. 105. 1; Marcellinus, *Vita Thuc.* 20; Plutarch, *Cimon*, 4.

{457} Thuc. iv. 103-107.

{458} Thuc. v. 26. 5.

{459} *Anon. Vit. Thuc.* 3; Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 46 (an interpolation: cf. 16, 26); Rogers (Aristophanes, *Knights*, pp. xxvii, xxviii).

{460} Pausanias, i. 23. 11; Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 32.

{461} Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 25. G. F. Abbott (*Thucydides*, p. 169) does his best for Marcellinus by substituting Pangaeus for the plane tree.

{462} Grundy, *Thucydides*, p. 41.

{463} Grundy *Thucydides*, p. 14) questions the one statement ap. Aulus Gellius (*N.A.* 15, 23) which sets the historian's birth in 471 B.C. Gellius' authority is, it is true, only that of a female antiquarian, one Pamphila of Nero's time. But Grundy's argument that Thucydides must have been born some ten years later, as "in the dry climate of Greece men age more rapidly than in the moister climates of North and Middle Europe", is not a happy one.

{464} This last is a good point made by J. B. Bury, *History of Greece,* p. 448. For Grote's defence of Cleon in the matter see chapter liii. (vol. v. pp. 328-334). Few of the "Grotesque school of historians", as Rogers indignantly calls them, have swallowed the whole of their master's pleadings for Cleon. But, *e.g.*, Busolt thinks that Thucydides failed in his duty to guard the whole of the Strymon line below the actual city of Amphipolis (*Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1155-1156).

{465} Holm, ii. (Eng. trans.), p. 395.

{466} *Griech. Gesch.* i. p. 554. Cf. *Attische Politik,* p. 43.

{467} *De Oratore,* ii. 56.

{468} Thuc. iv. 108.

{469} Thuc. iv. 109-116.

{470} Thuc. iv. 117-119.

{471} Thuc. iv. 120-121.

{472} Thuc. iv. 122. "This continued fighting in a distinct quarter while an armistice is being observed elsewhere is very like the situation in India between the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) and the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the Clive and Lawrence period" (Mr. C. T. Atkinson).

{473} Thuc. iv. 123.

{474} Thuc. iv. 124-128. Cf. Evelyn Abbott, *History of Greece,* iii. p. 252: "the step was fatal".

{475} Thuc. iv. 129-132.

{476} Thuc. iv. 135.

{477} Thuc. v. 7. 2.

{478} Thuc. v. 2-3.

{479} Thuc. v. 6.

{480} Thuc. v. 7-10.

{481} Thuc. v. 11.

{482} Thuc. v. 18, 32.

{483} Thuc. ii. 21; v. 16.

{484} *Attische Politik,* p. 46

{485} Thuc. v. 18; 23.

{486} Grote, vol. v. p. 453.

{487} The *New Statesman,* Sept. 5, 1925.

{488} Thuc. v. 43. 1.

{489} Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* tells all these tales.

{490} Classen prefers 420 B.C. But cf. Busolt, iii. 2, p 1268 note.

{491} Thuc. vi. 12; 16. Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 11.

{492} Thuc. vi. 15.

{493} Xen. *Hellenica*, i. 4.

{494} Eupolis, frag. 158. 351; Archippus, 45. Alluded to in Aristophanes *Daitaleis* frag. 1; *Acharnians*, 716; *Wasps*, 44. The identification with Peisthetaerus of the *Birds* is, as Couat says, a modern "jeu d'esprit". Cf. Rogers, Introduction to the *Birds*, pp. xvii-xix. For the *Baptai*—the "Lustbuben" with their sleek glossy hair—cf. Lucian, *adv. Indoct.* 27; Schol ad Juvenal, ii. 92.

{495} Couat.

{496} *E.g.* in the matter of Cyme, 407 B.C. See below, Chapter XI. § 1; Grote, vi. p. 376.

{497} Thuc. ii. 65. 12.

{498} Thuc. v. 43.

{499} Aristophanes, *Knights*, 465, a most valuable addition to Thucydides, who makes no mention of Cleon's visit to Argos. The poet's jeer that Cleon is in reality treacherously currying favour with Sparta on this occasion (!) is just the point where certain fact passes by way of humour into obvious fiction.

{500} Thuc. v. 44-46; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 14.

{501} *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1229.

{502} Thuc. v. 31, 34. Democracy at Elis, Xen. *Hellen.* iii. 2, 27, later—but probably the reason of Sparta's decision in favour of Lepreon.

{503} Thuc. v. 52-56.

{504} Thuc. v. 57-60.

{505} Cf. Diodorus xii. 78. 4; Xen. *Hellen.* iv. 2, 17, for these numbers.

{506} "The Argive outpost work must have been as bad as that of the Cavaliers in Cornwall in 1644, when they let Essex and the Parliamentary cavalry escape from Lostwithiel after fairly cornering them" (Mr. C. T. Atkinson).

{507} Thuc. v. 60. 3.

{508} Thuc. v. 58. 3, with 59. 2. Hence Agis himself cannot have been at Nemea and there is something wrong with Thuc. v. 60. 3, which puts him there, unless it means " within sight of Nemea ".

{509} The *plan* of Waterloo was for a joint battle from the first, the Prussians forming the Allies' left. But Gneisenau mistrusted Wellington and was false to his word. Only Blücher's fiery resolution saved the situation. "The reason why Wellington always discouraged study of Waterloo was that he did not want these facts to come out,—for political reasons mainly." (Mr. C. T. Atkinson).

{510} Thuc. v. 59. 4.

{511} Thuc. v. 63.

{512} *Forschungen*, p. 168 *sq.*

{513} *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1240-1242.

{514} Bury, *History of Greece*, p. 460.

{515} Just as Wellington did not wish the true story of Waterloo to be revealed lest it made bad blood with the Prussians. Cf. note *supra*.

{516} Thuc.v. 61-75. Throughout this section, the paper of W.J.Woodhouse, "The Campaign of Mantinea," ap. *Annual of the British School of Athens*, xxii., 1919, pp. 51-84, and its map have been invaluable. Cf. also the paper by Mr. Loring, ap. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1895, p. 85 *sq*. and maps.

{517} Thuc. v. 66. 2

{518} Thuc. v. 69. 2.

{519} Woodhouse, pp. 74-75.

{520} "In the eighteenth century and even in the Napoleonic wars the French were very fond of massing Grenadier and Light Companies, but it left the ordinary 'Battalion Companies' without the support and example of their best men. Wellington would have none of this practice. In the late war the Germans used the plan by forming special 'Sturm Truppen', even whole Divisions of them, but it meant that they had some units of very poor quality. The average level of our units was much higher than the Germans " (Mr. C. T. Atkinson).

{521} Thuc. v. 75. 3.

{522} Thuc. vi. 105. 2; Busolt, *Forschungen*, p. 171.

{523} *Beiträge*, p. 233 *sq*.

{524} See above, Chapter VI. § 3.

{525} Plutarch, *Nicias*, 11; *Alcibiades*, 13.

{526} Cf. Gilbert, *Beiträge*, p. 238.

{527} Thuc. viii. 73. Theopompus ap. Schol. to Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1007. Cf. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. *2*, pp. 1257-1259 and notes.

{528} Thuc. vi. 16. 6.

{529} Thuc. v. 79-82. Cf. Busolt, *Forschungen*, p. 179.

{530} Thuc. v. 82-84.

{531} Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 15-17.

{532} Thuc. v. 84-116. G. F. Abbott (*Thucydides*, pp. 192-193) disparages this masterpiece!

{533} *Not* in Thuc. But cf. Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 16 and pseudo-Andocides, *Alcibiades*, 22.

{534} Thuc. vi. 9-14; espec. vi. 10. 5.

{535} Hicks and Hill, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 70. Cf. Busolt p. 659.

{536} Thuc. v. 80. 2.

{537} Thuc. v. 82. 1.

{538} Thuc. v. 83. 4, the most likely interpretation of a vexed passage.

{539} Hicks and Hill, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 70, v. 26.

{540} Thuc. vi. 7. 3-4.

{541} Hicks and Hill, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, No. 70, *ad fin.* Cf. Thuc. vii. 9.

{542} Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1344-1371 (Rogers's translation, except the last few words).

{543} Thuc. vi. 6.

{544} Thuc. vi. 8; 46.

{545} Thuc. vi. 9-24.

{546} Aristophanes, *Birds*, 363; cf. Thuc. iii. 51.

{547} Thuc. vi. 67. 2; vii. 28. 3.

{548} Thuc. vi. 24. 4. The famous astronomer Meton is said to have opposed the expedition. In his anxiety to keep his son at home he could find no other way but that of burning his house to the ground in a pretended fit of madness. He then begged the Athenians to let his son off the expedition to help him in his disaster, and they pitifully allowed this. Socrates also, warned by his "familiar spirit", prophesied disaster (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 17).

{549} Gilbert Murray, *The Trojan Women of Euripides*, p. 6. I use this wonderful version throughout.

{550} *Troades*, 374-402.

{551} *Troades*, 586, 604-607.

{552} Thuc. vi. 32.

{553} *Troades*, 1240-1250.

{554} *Ib.* 610-613.

{555} *Ib.* 95-97.

{556} *Troades*, 1322-1332.

{557} Murray, p. 7.

{558} Euripides, *Suppliants*, 489-494. Concerning the influence of contemporary politics upon Euripides and the poet's allusions to men and events of his own time, P. Decharme has an admirable Chapter in his *Euripides and the spirit of his dramas* (trans. J. Loeb), chapter v. pp. 119-142.

{559} Thuc. vi. 27-29; 53. 2; 60-61; Andocides, *On the Mysteries* (399 B.C.) *passim*; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18-21; Isocrates, Or. xvi.; Philochorus ap. Schol. ad Aristoph., *Lysistrata*, 1094; Diodorus xiii. 2.

{560} Thuc. vi. 60. 2. Excitement about the profanation of the Mysteries was rampant in the spring of 414 B.C. when Aristophanes produced his comedy the *Birds*. Cf. *Birds*, 1073, and Schol. ad loc. with Rogers's note.

{561} Thuc. vi. 60. 5.

{562} Thuc. vi. 61. 4.

{563} Andocides, 38; Grote (vi. p. 35, note) and Busolt (iii. 2, pp. 1288-1289) believe in this full moon, as do many others. Hence the supposed date, May 22.

{564} Diodorus and Plutarch.

{565} Thuc. viii. 65. Cf. Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 19.

{566} Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 19.

{567} Ap. Philochorus and Plutarch.

{568} Ap. Plutarch. Gilbert, *Beiträge*, p. 250 *sq*. accepts this view. So does Meyer (see below).

{569} Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 39. So Grote, vi. p. 8.

{570} II. p. 38.

{571} *Gesch d. Alt.* iv. p. 506.

{572} Thuc. vi. 30-53; 61-93.

{573} Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 390-398, and Schol. ad loc.

{574} Thuc. vi. 31. 6.

{575} *History of Sicily*, iii. 121.

{576} Stein, *Rhein. Mus.* lv. (1900) p. 547, quoted ap. Busolt, iii. 2, p. 1302.

{577} Thuc. vi. 47.

{578} Thuc. vi. 48; 49.

{579} Thuc. vi. 50. 1.

{580} Holm, *History of Greece*, Eng. trans. ii. p. 471; Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iii. p. 144; Curtius, *History of Greece*, Eng. trans. iii. p. 336; Grote, Vi. pp. 27-29.

{581} Thuc. vii. 42. 3.

{582} Thuc. vi. 17. 3, 4.

{583} Beloch (ii. p. 48) thinks he had not pluck enough to defy the summons!

{584} Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 22.

{585} Thuc. vi. 92.

{586} Thuc. vi. 67-70.

{587} I. 98. Cf. Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iii. 165-175 and 653-656.

{588} Polyaenus, *Strategem.* i. 39. 2.

{589} Marchant, Introd. to Thucydides' Book VI. p. xv.

{590} Thuc. vi. 94; 97.

{591} Thuc. vi. 96—vii. 18. "Siege" is traditional: "Investment" would be more accurate.

{592} It is so represented on the plan, p. 367, which is based on Classen. The northern suburb of Tycha, which figures on most plans as being now enclosed, is not mentioned by Thucydides at all, and both its wall and its very name (despite one mention by Diodorus (xi. 68) of small value) were, in my opinion, later. I therefore omit them in my plan.

{593} Marked 1..... 1 on the plan.

{594} Marked 2..... 2 on the plan

{595} Marked 3..... 3 on the plan

{596} So the Russian Baltic Squadron on its voyage to Port Arthur lost some two knots in speed from this cause before the end came at Tsushima. (*War in the Far East,* p. 502.)

{597} *Gesch. d. Alt.* iv. pp. 532-536.

{598} *History of Sicily,* iii. pp. 276-277.

{599} Thuc. vii. 21-25; 32-33; 35-72.

{600} Thuc. vii. 34. See above, Chapter II. § 1.

{601} Freeman argues these were the Thespiaeans of Thuc. vii. 25. 3 (*History of Sicily,* iii. pp. 313-314).

{602} The position of these "crags" is quite uncertain.

{603} "Here Thucydides has come perilously near to melodrama" (G. F. Abbott, *Thucydides,* p. 203). But Grote's praise of the historian's "condensed and burning phrases" (vi. p. 160) holds good.

{604} "Napoleon said that that side wins the battle which can go on when it is exhausted. Battles are won by dog-tired men, who thought they could do no more" (Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh, 1916, ii. p. 451).

{605} Thuc. vii. 73-87. Cf. Diodorus, xiii. 18, 19; Plutarch, *Nicias,* 26-29. For the route of the retreat see Freeman, *History of Sicily,* iii. Appendix xxii. and his map, p. 367.

{606} Plutarch, *Nicias,* 28.

{607} Pausanias vii. 16, 4-5.

{608} *Nicias,* 29.

{609} Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 54.

{610} Thuc. viii. 2, 2; 24. 5.

{611} "Decelean", *e.g.* in Isocrates, Demosthenes, Diodorus, "Cratippus", etc. Thucydides himself speaks of "The later War" (v. 26. 3) or "The Ionian War" (viii. 11. 3), in contrast to "the first" or "the Ten-years" or "the earlier" War (v. 25. 1; 26. 3; 20. 3; vii. 18, 2).

{612} Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, chapter 7 § 34.

{613} Thuc. vii. 28. 2; cf. viii. 69. 1. Cf. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1402-1403, and the new evidence in "Cratippus" (Oxyrhync. Pap. v. chapter xii. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 555-558 (produced in 411 B.C.); also, for its disastrous effects, Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth,* p. 40.

{614} Marcellinus, *Vita Thuc.* 43-44.

{615} Such as the Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution,* recovered in 1891. The story of the Oligarchic Revolution of 411 B.C. cannot be dealt with in this book at any length. I can only say here that the later treatise seems to me to be but a clumsy suture of rival political manifestos of the time.

{616} Thuc. vii. 28. Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs,* 363 (Aegina). Tribute still at Calchedon in 409 B.C. (Xen. *Hellen.* i. 3, 9) and Neapolis on Strymon (Hicks and Hill, *Greek Inscriptions,* No. 75). Cf. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1407-1408.

{617} So Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1405-1406. Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 55, thinks the Poristae now for the first time created. Meyer, *Gesch. d. Alt. iv.* p. 558, makes little of them. Cf. Beloch at length *in Rhein Mus.* xxxix. 249-259. The office is mentioned by Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1504-1505 and by Antiphon, vi. 49. Possibly Cleophon "handled the affairs of the city for many years" (Lysias, xix. 48) in virtue of this office, for the famous demagogue was a general only twice, in 406 and 405 B.C.

{618} Thuc. viii. 53. 2.

{619} Thuc. viii. 1, 3; Aristotle, *Ath. Const.* 29. 2; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 421 and Schol.; Aristotle, Rhet. iii. 18 ("undoubtedly Sophocles the poet"—Busolt, iii. 2, p. 1410, note 2). The "Hagnon" is certainly Theramenes' father, but his identity with the founder of Amphipolis is "at least doubtful" (Busolt, *loc. cit.*).

{620} Ps.-Lys. xx. 11. Cf. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1412-1413.

{621} Thuc. viii. 15. 1; cf. 24, 40. Schol. ad Aristophanes, *Birds*, 880.

{622} Thuc. viii. 10. The MSS. give "Peiraion", and this is adopted, *e.g.* by Jowett and Classen. "Speiraion" in Stuart Jones (Oxf. Class. Texts), following O. Müller.

{623} Thuc. viii. 18. 1. This is known as the "treaty of Miletus".

{624} Thuc. viii. 37, 58. The second is the "treaty of Therimenes".

{625} Thuc. viii. 43; 52; 84. Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 6, 7.

{626} Beloch, *Griech. Gesch.* ii. p. 58.

{627} Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 582-586.

{628} Thuc. viii. 64.

{629} Thuc. viii. 5; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 1, 32; 2, 18; 3, 5; 3, 15. Cf. Clearidas at Amphipolis and Pasitelidas at Torone despite all Brasidas' promises of "liberty" to the cities (Thuc. iv. 132).

{630} Thuc. viii. 16; 21; 73.

{631} Thuc. viii. 73. 4.

{632} Thuc. viii. 42.

{633} Thuc. viii. 87.

{634} Xen. *Hellen.* iii. 3. 2; a better authority than the scandalous Duris ap. Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 23; *Agesilaus*, 3.

{635} Thuc. viii. 45-46; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 23-25.

{636} Thuc. viii. 63. 4.

{637} Jowett (Thuc. viii. 47. 2). "Die Lumpendemocratie" (Beloch ii. p. 64).

{638} Thuc. viii. 47.

{639} Thuc. viii. 53.

{640} Thuc. viii. 54; 56; 63.

{641} Thuc. viii. 64-68. The discrepancies of the inferior Aristotelian story need not worry us.

{642} Thuc. viii. 68. 4 (Jowett's translation).

{643} Cf. above, Chapter VI. § 3.

{644} Thuc. viii. 76—a noble chapter.

{645} Thuc. viii. 86. 8. For the Garibaldi epic see Trevelyan's fine book, *Garibaldi and the Fall of the Roman Republic*, p. 227.

{646} Thuc. viii. 81. 3. Jowett's "fulsome assurances" is an unfair translation.

{647} Thuc. viii. 86. 4. Here is the most famous of all the disputed textual readings in Thucydides, and the only one which is of any real historical importance. For upon it turns the question whether here in one single word, upon the authority of one single ancient manuscript, the Codex Vaticanus (B), Thucydides has tacitly condemned the whole of Alcibiades' previous career. This MS. has for the latter part of Thucydides' text (from vi. 92 to the end) been elevated by the Oxford editor, Stuart Jones, to a position of primary authority. Here in viii. 86. 4, it reads "proton", *i.e.* this was Alcibiades' *first* service. The other MSS. whom the Dutch editor Hude prefers, read "protos", *i.e.* this was his "very signal" service. The latter is the harder and less obvious reading, and I for one on this and on other grounds *(e.g.* Thuc. vi. 15) have no hesitation in preferring it. The campaign of Mantinea, the expedition to Sicily, are not to be condemned on the strength of a single letter of doubtful authority.

{648} The Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution*, chapters iv. (Draco!) and xxix.-xxxi.

{649} Thuc. viii. 91. 3.

{650} Thuc. viii. 60.

{651} Thuc. viii. 96. 5.

{652} Thuc. viii. 68. 2.

{653} Thuc. viii. 97. 2.

{654} Thuc. viii. 99-101; Grote vi. pp. 326-327. See the sketch map at the beginning of this chapter.

{655} The Thuc. MSS. (viii. 106. 1) vary between the two latter names. The identification with the Rhodius is probable.

{656} Thuc. viii. 104-106. Cf. Custance, *War at Sea*, pp. 40-42 (and plan). This battle was fought in the very waters where the British fleet was worsted on March 18, 1915, in its attempt to force the passage of the strait.

{657} Custance, p. 41.

{658} Custance, p. 42 note, cites the battle of Lepanto, A. D. 1571, as a parallel.

{659} Thuc. viii. 106.

{660} Xen *Hellen.* i. 1, 1-13; Diodorus xii. 49.

{661} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 1, 16-18; Diodorus xiii. 50-51; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 28.

{662} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 1, 23.

{663} Diclorus xiii. 52-53. Xenophon says nothing of this!

{664} Lysias xx. 48. See note on the Poristae above, Chapter X. § 2

{665} Aristophanes, *Frogs.* 678-681 (Rogers's translation). Cf. *ib.* 1302. Cleophon "cinaedus", Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae*, 105 and Schol. ad loc.

{666} Couat.

{667} Curtius.

{668} *History of Greece,* vi. pp. 346-349.

{669} Pylos: Xen. *Hellen.* i. 2, 18; Diodorus xiii. 64. Nisaea: Diodorus xiii. 65 (one of Xenophon's many omissions).

{670} The famous "Diobelia". I follow Beloch in this (*Griech. Gesch.* ii. pp. 77-78).

{671} Xen. *Hellen* i. 3; Diodorus xiii. 66; Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* 30; Hicks and Hill, *Greek Inscriptions,* No. 77.

{672} See Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1561-1562.

{673} Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 4, 11-21; Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* 32-35.

{674} Aristophanes, *Frogs,* 1466.

{675} Plutarch, *Lysander,* 4; Xen. *Hellen.* i. 5. 3-7.

{676} In the following account I try to make one intelligible story of two main and two minor "authorities" which are hopelessly at variance one with another, viz. Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 5, who never even mentions Cyme; Diodorus, xiii. 71-74; Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* 35-36, and *Lysander,* 4-5; Nepos, *Alciabiades,* 7. This last is a curiously valuable addition to the available evidence, though Grote remarks cavalierly, "Nepos briefly glances at it (the 'story of Kyme')".

{677} Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* 10.

{678} This famous story is of doubtful truth however.

{679} *History of Greece,* vi. pp. 376-382.

{680} Thuc. viii. 31. 3-4; 100. 3.

{681} E. Meyer, *Gesch. d. Alt.* iv. p. 577.

{682} Plutarch, *Alcibiades,* 38.

{683} Isocrates, *Zeug.* 21.

{684} Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 6; Diodorus xiii. 76-79 (407 B.C.); 97-103 (406 B.C.). Cf. throughout, Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, pp. 1582-1609; and for the battle itself, Custance, *War at Sea,* pp. 42-44.

{685} *Griech. Gesch.* iii 2, p. 1587, note 2.

{686} Thuc. viii. 41. 2; 62. 1; Plato, *Republic,* v. 469 B (Aristotle speaks far less decisively, but seems to be of the same opinion; *Politics,* i. 6, 7; vii. 10); Xenophon, *Agesilaus,* vii. 6.

{687} Trevelyan on Mazzini.

{688} Grote vi. pp. 387-389.

{689} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6, 14-15; Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1587.

{690} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 6, 15. Lysander's "Clubs"—Plutarch, *Lysander,* 5, 13; Diodorus xiii. 70.

{691} Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs.* 720 (with Rogers's note) and Schol. ad loc. Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1591.

{692} Lysias xxi. 8.

{693} Cicero, *De officiis,* i. 24, 84.

{694} "Rhetorisch ausgeputzt und im ganzen ein wertloses Phantasiestürk" (Busolt, p. 1594 note). Meyer, too, thinks but poorly of Ephorus's efforts *(Gesch. d. Alt.* iv. p. 646).

{695} Custance, p. 43.

{696} Grote vi. pp. 395-396.

{697} Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 7.

{698} Grote vi. pp. 414-416, demolishes Xenophon's impossible story completely.

{699} As Grote urges (vi. p. 420) there is no reason to doubt but that this incident of the sea-fight did actually occur.

{700} Possibly against the "Decree of Cannonus", a very vexed question, on which Xenophon, *Hellen.* i. 7, 20, and 34, throws an uncertain light, not clarified by Aristophanes, *Eccleziasusae,* 1089, or even by Rogers's long note ad loc. Cf. Grote vi. pp. 417-419.

{701} vi. pp. 400-430.

{702} Xen. i. 7. 5.

{703} Xen. i. 7. 6.

{704} Xen. i. 7. 32.

{705} Xen. ii. 3, 35.

{706} Xen. i. 7. 3.

{707} Diodorus xiii. 101.

{708} Xen. *Hellen.* i. 7, 35.

{709} vi. pp. 410-411.

{710} 6, 37.

{711} xiii. 100. 2.

{712} Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 3, 32.

{713} *Frogs,* 533-541 (Rogers's translation).

{714} *Frogs,* 964-970 (Rogers's translation).

{715} The amount of misplaced ingenuity lavished, from the Scholiast downwards, upon this pun of Keios—Chios (intended to be laughed at with ready appreciation by a huge audience!) is amazing. Even W. W. Merry himself in his note on the passage has fallen into the Scholiast's trap. Rogers as usual has "hit the happy nail on the head" (to quote another Rector of an Oxford College).

{716} Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 3, 31.

{717} Thuc. viii. 68. 4. (Jowett's translation—a fair one. But Jowett's later heading to his page, "Theramenes the Trimmer", is utterly unwarranted by anything in Thucydides' own language.)

{718} Cf. Thuc. iii. 82. 8: "Citizens who stood between the two extreme parties fell a prey to both."

{719} Thuc. viii. 97. 2; Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*; 28. 5 (with special mention of Theramenes); Euripides, *Supplices*, 244-245. Cf. L. Whibley, *Political Parties in Athens*, p. 92.

{720} *Frogs*, 1420-1465 (Rogers's translation).

{721} Lysias, *Agoratus*, 10.

{722} See note at the end of this chapter.

{723} Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 34, 1; Schol. ad Aristoph. *Frogs*, 1528; Grote vi. p. 431. As Beloch says (ii. p. 101 note), Grote could hardly have doubted the tale had he had the Aristotelian text itself instead of the scholia only. I do not consider it "excess of caution" to believe also in the peace offer after Cyzicus in 410 B.C., as does G. F. Abbott (*Thucydides*, p. 137, note).

{724} Xenophon, *Hellen.* ii. 1, 1-14; Diodorus xiii. 104; Plutarch, *Lysander*, 9; Pausanias x. 9. Isocrates (viii. 97) gives the total amount contributed by the Persians to the Spartans as 5000 talents. Next year Lysander brings back to Sparta after his last campaign a still unspent sum of 470 talents (Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 3, 8).

{725} Xenophon, *Hellen.* ii. 1, 31; Plutarch, *Lysander*, 9, 13; Cicero, *De officiis*, iii. 11, 46; Aelian ii. 9. Cf. Grote vi. p. 440.

{726} Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* iii. 2, p. 1617.

{727} Plutarch, *Lysander*, 11 (abbreviated).

{728} Xenophon, *Hellen.* ii. 1, 32; Lysias xiv. 38; ii. 58; Pausanias iv. 17. 3; x. 9, 11; Isocrates v. 62; Demosthenes xix. 191. Modern writers are hopelessly divided on the question of Adeimantus' treachery (cf. Busolt, p. 1623). Conon's later accusation of him is utterly worthless. Aristophanes, before the disaster, consigns Adeimantus to Hades (*Frogs*, 1513), but there is not a syllable in the poet's lines to justify Rogers's version—"the vilest rascal in all the town"!

{729} Plutarch, *Lysander*, 13.

{730} The Aeginetans had been evicted *en masse* from their island home in 431 B.C., and the refugees at Thyrea were attacked and brutally slain seven years later (Thuc. ii. 27; iv. 57).

{731} See Motley, *Dutch Republic*, p. 574, for this epic incident of 1574 A.D.

{732} Plutarch, *Lysander*, 14.

{733} Xenophon, *Hellen.* ii. 2, 23.

{734} There is a conflict of evidence whether the Spartan garrison under Callibius had already been sent, as also whether the reign of terror was already in full swing when Theramenes made his stand. Xenophon *(Hellen.* ii. 3, 11-14) asserts both—the view which is the less creditable to Theramenes. Aristotle *(Ath. Const.* 37) refuses to tar Theramenes with the blacking from either brush. Diodorus (xiv. 4) tends to confirm Xenophon.

{735} Grote vi. p. 473 has stereotyped this translation of the Greek (Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 3, 56). Possibly "the honourable" or "gentleman" Critias is nearer the original. The version of Theramenes' "trial" given by Aristotle *(Ath. Const.* 37) is less picturesque than, and not necessarily therefore preferable to, that in Xenophon.

{736} Fancy was busy with Alcibiades' death. The story in the text is based on Plutarch (*Alcibiades*, 39) who also gives another tale, as does Diodorus (from Ephorus) xiv. 11, yet a third story. Cf. Isocrates xvi. 40. It is curious that Xenophon makes no mention of his death. Grote on Alcibiades' death, vi. pp. 532-533: on Theramenes', vi. p. 474.

{737} Athenaeus xiii. 574 E. Hadrian was at Melissa 125 A.D.

{738} The whole story at enormous length in Xenophon, *Hellen.* ii. 4: a trifle more succinctly in Aristotle, *Ath.*

***Const.*** **37-40: still wordily (and hopelessly out of place) in Diodorus xiv. 32, 33.**

{739} **Cf. Aristotle,** ***Ath. Const.*** **41 for Archinus' services in full.**

{740} **Cicero,** ***Philippics,*** **i. 1.**